

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
S. JOHNSON, LL. D.
WITH
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Cooke's Edition.

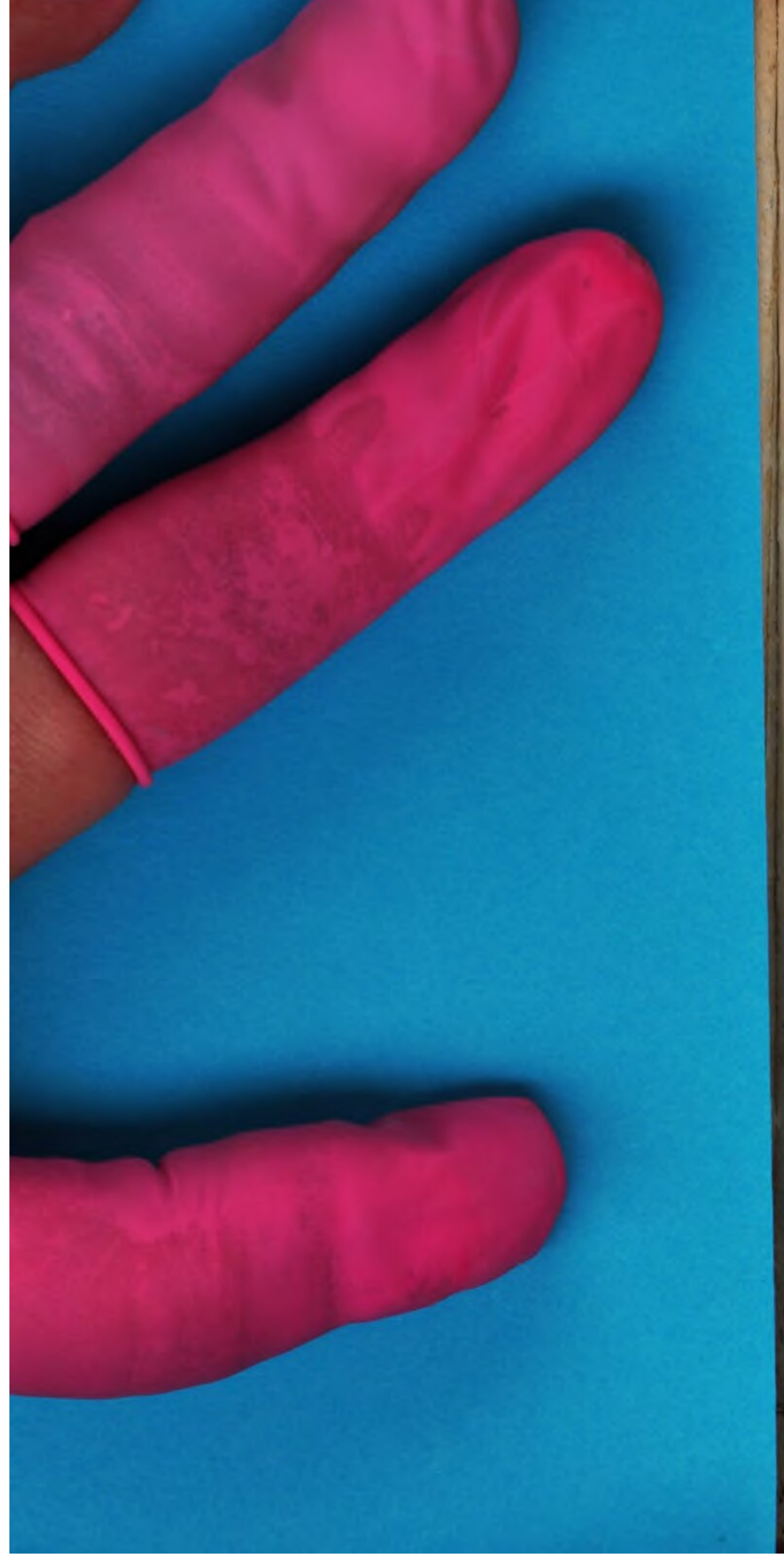
Transcendant genius, whose prolific vein
Ne'er knew the frigid poet's toil and pain,
To whom Apollo opens all his store,
And ev'ry Muse presents her sacred lore;
Say, powerful JOHNSON, whence thy verse is fraught
With so much grace, such energy of thought;
Whether thy *Juvenal* instructs the age
In chaster numbers, and new-points his rage;
Or fair *Irene* sees, alas, too late,
Her innocence exchange'd for guilty state:
Whate'er you write, in every golden line
Sublimity and elegance combine;
Thy nervous phrase impresses every soul,
While harmony gives rapture to the whole.

Mr. Murphy's Poetical Epistle to Johnson.

EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

London:

Printed for C. COOKE, No. 17, Paternoster-Row
and sold by all the Booksellers in
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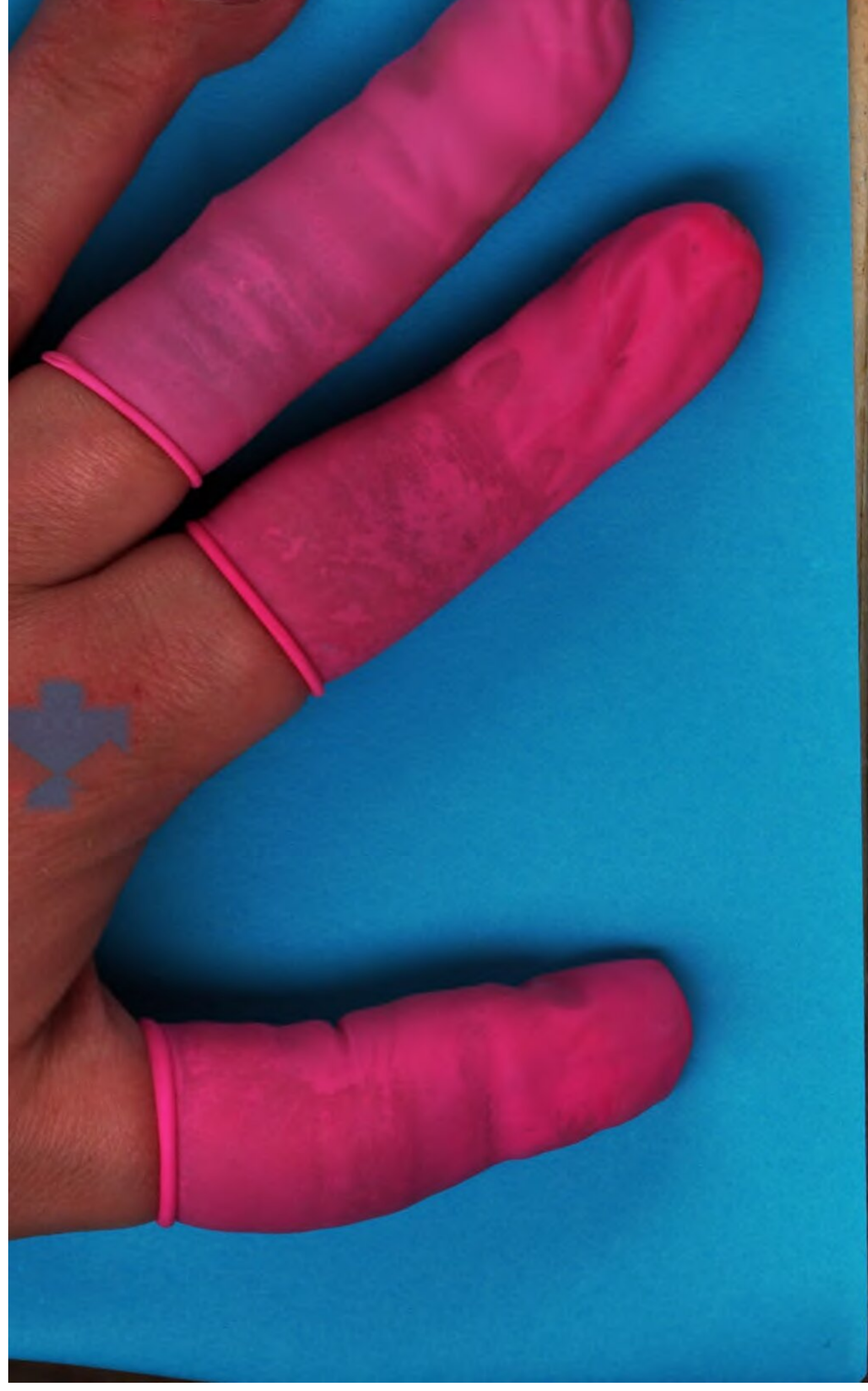
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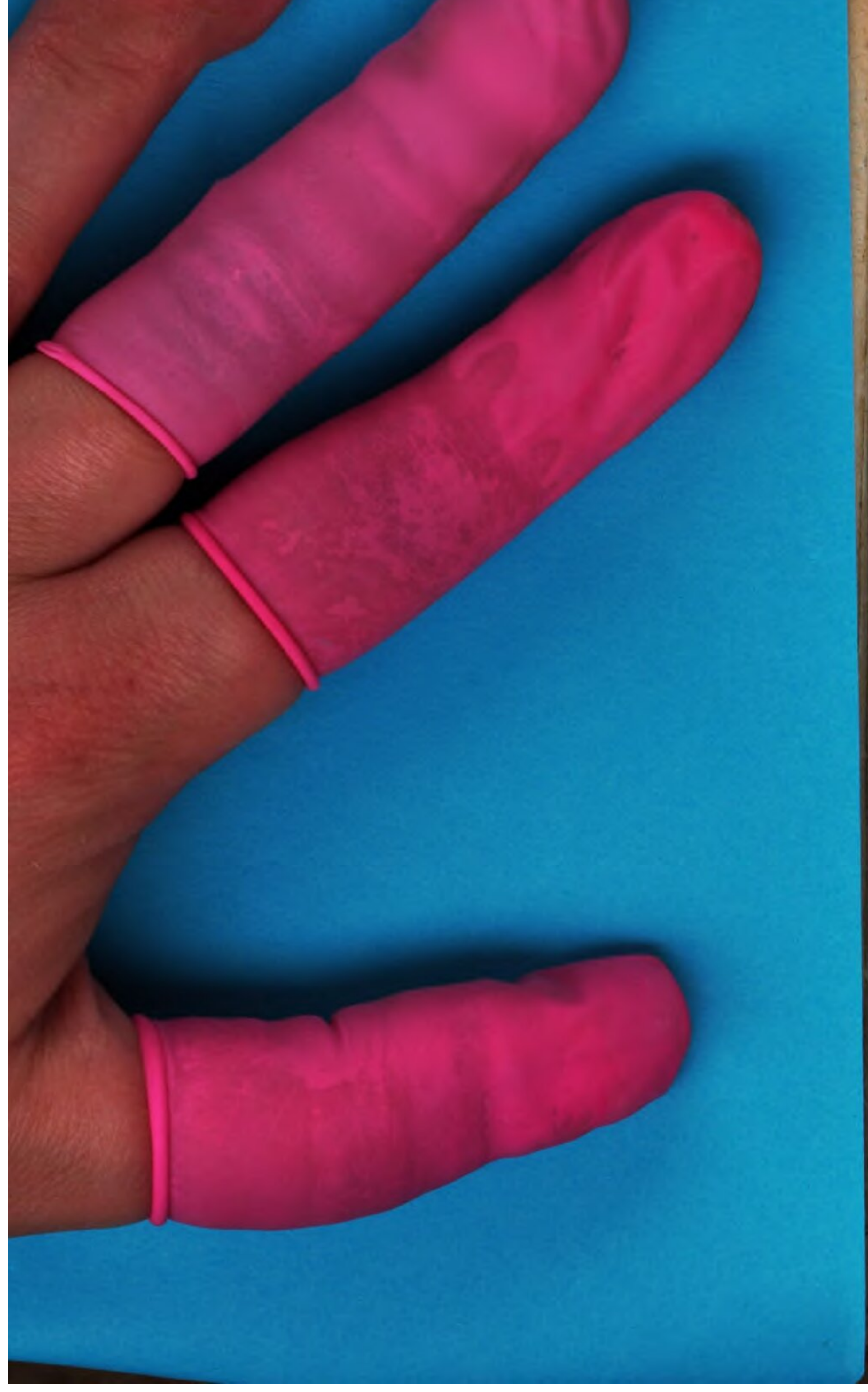
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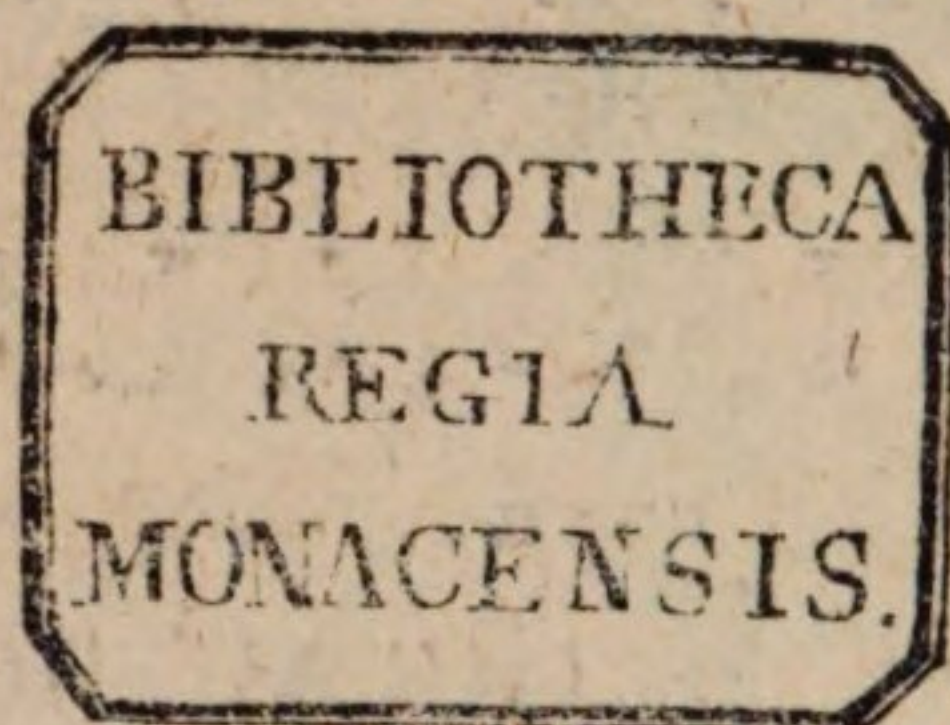
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BIBLIOTHECA

REGIA

MONACENSIS.

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CONTAINING HIS

LONDON: A SATIRE.

VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES.

ODES,

PROLOGUES.

MISCELLANIES.

EPITAPHS.

&c. &c. &c.

Nor was his energy confin'd alone
To friends around his philosophic throne;
His influence wide improv'd our letter'd isle,
And lucid vigour mark'd the general style:
As Nile's proud waves, swoln from their oozy bed,
First o'er the neighb'ring mead majestic spread;
Till, gath'ring force, they more and more expand,
And with due virtue fertilize the land.

Mr. Courtenay's Poetical Review.

London:
PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED
Under the Direction of
C. COOK.

LIFE OF DR. JOHNSON, L. L. D.

THERE is not perhaps in the whole annals of literature, a life which has afforded more events for the detail of the biographer, than that of the very extraordinary character, which is the subject of the following memoirs. As it is natural that the merits and demerits, personal and literary, of a man so eminently distinguished in the departments of biography and criticism as Johnson, should attract the notice and call forth the exertions of numerous writers; it is not to be accounted singular, that besides several slight sketches of his life taken by unknown authors, both favorable and copious narratives should have been presented to the world by Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Tyers, Mrs. Piozzi, Dr. Towers, and Mr. Arthur Murphy; who from their intimate acquaintance with him, were enabled to write from personal knowledge. These several writers, by representing his character in different lights, contrasting his virtues with his faults, and displaying in a variety of anecdotes and incidents, the strength of his mind and the poignancy of his wit, have greatly contributed to the instruction and entertainment of those who are particularly inclined to the reading of biography. Amongst the number specified, the publications of Sir John Hawkins and Mr. Boswell being more elaborately composed, claim a pre-eminence over the rest, and entitle their authors to the appellation of his biographers; while the accounts of the others being compressed by abridgment, are more properly denominated ‘Biographical Sketches,’ ‘Anecdote,’ and ‘Essays’—The major part of the facts related in the present account, have therefore of course been taken from the narratives of the before mentioned biographers, with the additions of such particulars, as other narratives have been found to supply.

Samuel Johnson was the eldest son of Michael Johnson, a bookseller at Litchfield, in which city this great man was born, on the 7th of September 1709. His mother, Sarah Ford, was the sister of Dr. Joseph Ford, an eminent physician and father of Cornelius Ford, chaplain to Lord
A Chesterfield,

Chesterfield, supposed to be the parson in Hogarth's 'Modern Midnight Conversation'—a man of great parts, but profligate manners—Mrs. Ford was a woman of distinguished understanding, prudence and piety.

As something extraordinary is often related of the infant state of a great genius, we are told by Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins, that at the age of three years Johnson trod by accident upon one of a brood of eleven ducks, and killed it, and upon that occasion made the following verses.

Here lies good master duck,
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on.
If it had liv'd, it had been *good luck*,
For then we'd had an *odd one*.

But very extraordinary must be that credulity, that can admit of these verses being the production of a child of such an early age; credulity however is relieved from the burthen of doubt by Johnson's having himself assured Mr. Boswell, that they were made by his father who wished them to pass for his son's. He added, 'my father was a foolish old man, that is to say, foolish in talking of his children.'

Johnson was initiated in classical learning at the free school of his native city, under the tuition of Mr. Hunter, and having afterwards resided some time at the house of his cousin Cornelius Ford, who assisted him in the classics, he was by his advice at the age of fifteen removed to the school of Stourbridge in Worcestershire, of which Mr. Wentworth was then master, whom he has described as 'a very able man, but an idle man; and to him unreasonably severe.'—Parson Ford he has described in his life of Tonten, as 'a clergyman at that time too well known, whose abilities, instead of furnishing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and the dissolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wise.'

On the 31st of October 1728, he was entered a commoner of Pembroke College, Oxford, being then in his nineteenth year. Of his tutor Mr. Jourden, he gave the following account. 'He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not profit much by his instruction; indeed I did not attend him much.' He had however, a love and respect for Jourden, not for his literature, but
for

for his worth. 'Whenever,' said he, 'a young man becomes Jourden's pupil, he becomes his son.'

In the year 1730, Mr. Corbet a young gentleman whom Johnson had accompanied to Oxford as a companion, left the University, and his father, to whom according to the account of Sir John Hawkins, Johnson trusted for support, declined contributing any farther to that purpose; and as his father's business was by no means lucrative, his remittances were consequently too small to supply even the deficiencies of external appearance. Thus unfortunately situated, he was under the necessity of quitting the University without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three years. This was a circumstance which in the subsequent part of his life he had occasion to regret, as an obstacle to his obtaining a settlement, whence he might have derived that subsistence which he could not procure by any other means.

In December 1731, his father died, in the 79th year of his age, in very narrow circumstances, so that for present support, he condescended to accept the employment of usher, in the free grammar-school at Market Bosworth in Leicestershire, which he relinquished in a short time, and went to reside at Birmingham, where he derived considerable benefit from several of his literary productions.

Notwithstanding the apparent austerity of his temper, he was by no means insensible to the power of female charms; when at Stourbridge school he was much enamoured of Olivia Lloyd, a young quaker, to whom he addressed a copy of verses. In 1735 he became the warm admirer of Mrs. Porter, widow of Mr. Henry Porter, mercer in Birmingham. 'It was,' he said, 'a love match on both sides,' and judging from a description of their persons, we must suppose that the passion was not inspired by the beauties of form or graces of manner; but by a mutual admiration of each others minds. Johnson's appearance is described as very forbidding. 'He was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrophula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair which was straight and stiff, and separated behind; and he had seemingly convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended at once to excite surprise and ridicule.' Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson, and her person and manner as

described by Garrick were by no means pleasing to others. 'She was,' he says, 'very fat, with a bosom of more than ordinary protuberance. Her swelled cheeks were of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increased by the liberal use of cordials; she was flaring and fantastic in her dress, and affected both in her speech and her general behaviour.' It was beyond a doubt, however, that whatever her real charms might have been, in the eye of her husband she was extremely beautiful, for in her epitaph he has recorded her as such, and given many instances in his writings of a sincere and permanent affection.

With the property he acquired with his wife, which is supposed to have amounted to about 800l. he attempted to establish a boarding school for young gentlemen at Edial, near Litchfield; but the plan proved abortive, the only pupils put under his care, were Garrick, the celebrated English Roscius, his brother George, and a Mr. Offely a young gentleman of good fortune, who died early.* Disappointed in his expectation of deriving a subsistence from the establishment of a boarding school, he set out on the 2d of March, 1737, being then in the 28th year of his age, for London; and it is a memorable circumstance, that his pupil Garrick went there at the same time, with an intention to complete his education, and follow the profession of the law. They were recommended to Mr. Colson, master of the mathematical school at Rochester, by a letter from a friend, who mentions the joint expedition of these two eminent men to the metropolis in the following manner.

'This young gentleman and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. Samuel Johnson, set out this morning together for London. Davy Garrick is to be with you early next week, and Mr. Johnson to try his fate with a tragedy, and endeavour to get himself employed in some translation, either from the Latin or the French. Johnson is a very good scholar, and I have great hopes he will turn out a fine tragedy writer.' In London he found it necessary to practise the most rigid œconomy, and his *Osellus* in the *Art of Living in London*, is the real character of an Irish painter,

* About this time he was assiduously engaged in his tragedy called *Irene*, with which his friends were so well pleased that they advised him to proceed with it. It is founded upon a passage in Smollet's *History of the Turks*, a book which he afterwards highly praised and recommended in the *Rambler*.

who initiated him in the mode of living cheaply in London. Here he experienced the kindness and hospitality of Mr. Hervey, one of the branches of the Bristol family; and ever after retained a grateful sense of the services he rendered him. Not very long before his death, he thus described this early friend, 'Harry Hervey, he was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog *Hervey* I shall love him.'

In three months after he came to London, his tragedy being as he thought completely finished, and fit for the stage, he solicited Mr. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre to bring it out at his house; but Mr. Fleetwood declined receiving it. Soon after he was employed by Mr. Cave, as a co-adjutor in his magazine, which for some years was his principal resource for support. His first performance in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' was a Latin Ode, *Ad Urbanum*, in March 1738; a translation of which by an unknown correspondent appeared in the Magazine for May following.

At this period the misconduct and misfortunes of Savage had reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness, as a writer for bread; and his visits at St. John's Gate, where the 'Gentleman's Magazine' was originally printed, naturally brought Johnson and him together, and as they both possessed great abilities, and were equally under the pressure of want, they had naturally a fellow feeling; so that in a short time the strictest intimacy subsisted between them. Johnson mentioned to Sir Joshua Reynolds some of their whimsical adventures in an early life, and in his writings describes Savage as having a 'graceful and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which upon a nearer acquaintance softened into an engaging easiness of manners.' How much he admired his friend Savage, for that knowledge of letters which he himself so much cultivated, and what kindness he entertained for him is evident, from some verses he wrote for the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' for April 1738.

About the same time he became acquainted with Miss Elizabeth Carter, the learned translator of *Epicætetus*, to whom he shewed particular tokens of respect, and in the same magazine complimented her in an *Ænigma* to Eliza, both in Greek and Latin. He writes Mr. Cave, 'I think she ought to be celebrated in as many different languages as Lewis Le Grand.'

In May 1738, he published his *London, a Poem*, written in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal. It has been generally said that he offered it to several booksellers, none of whom would purchase it. Mr. Cave at length communicated it to Dodsley, who had judgment enough to discern its intrinsic merit, and thought it creditable to be concerned in it. Dodsley gave him ten pounds for the copy. It is remarkable that it came out on the same morning with Pope's Satire, entitled 'One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight.' Pope was so struck with its merit, that he sought to discover the author, and prophesied his future fame, and from his note to Lord Gower, it seems that he was successful in his enquiries. From a short extract in the Gentleman's Magazine for May, it appears that the poem got to the second edition in the space of a week. Indeed this admirable production laid the foundation of Johnson's fame.

In the course of his engagement with Cave, he composed the *Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia*, the first number of which appeared in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for June 1738, sometimes with feigned names of the several speakers, with denominations formed of the letters of their real names, so that they might be easily decyphered. Parliament then kept the press in a kind of mysterious awe, which rendered it necessary to have recourse to such devices. The debates for some time were taken and digested by Guthrie, and afterwards sent by Mr. Cave to Johnson for revision: when Guthrie afterwards was engaged in a diversity of employment, and the speeches were more enriched by the accession of Johnson's genius; it was resolved that he should do the whole himself from notes furnished by persons employed to attend in both houses of parliament. His sole composition of them began November 19, 1740, and ended February 23d, 1742-3. From that time they were written by Hawkesworth to the year 1760.

He derived however, so little emolument from his literary productions, that notwithstanding the success of his *London*, he was willing to accept of an offer made him of becoming master of a free school, at a salary of sixty pounds a year; but as the statutes of the school required that he should be a Master of Arts, he was under the necessity of declining it. It is said of Pope to his honour, that without any knowledge of Johnson but from his *London*, he recommended

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Thus disappointed, he was under the necessity of persevering in that course into which he was forced, and therefore resumed his design of translating Father Paul's *History of the Council of Trent* in two volumes quarto, which were announced in the 'Weekly Miscellany, Oct. 21st, 1738. Though twelve sheets of this translation were printed off, Johnson was unfortunately frustrated in his design; for it happened that another Samuel Johnson, librarian of St. Martin in the Fields, and curate of that parish, had engaged in the same undertaking, under the patronage of the learned Dr. Pearce, the consequence of which was an opposition, that destroyed the productive effects of both the works.

In the same year he took part in the opposition to the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, and published a pamphlet entitled, *Marmor Norfolciense* by *Probus Britannicus*, in which he inveighed against the Brunswick succession and the measures of government consequent upon it, with the most intemperate zeal, and pointed sarcasm. Sir John Hawkins says, that the jacobite principles inculcated in this pamphlet aroused the vigilance of the ministry, and that a warrant was issued and messengers employed to apprehend the author, who it seems was known; but that he eluded their search, by retiring to an obscure lodging in Lambeth Marsh. Mr. Boswell denies the authenticity of this story, alledging that Mr. Steele, one of the secretaries of the treasury, had directed every possible search to be made in the records of the treasury, and secretary of state's office; but could find no trace of any warrant having been issued to apprehend the author of this pamphlet.

This jacobitical production obtained the sanction of the Tory party in general, and of Pope in particular, as appears from the following note concerning Johnson, copied with minute exactness by Mr. Boswell from the original, in the possession of Dr. Percy.

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He has an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes, so as to make him a sad spectacle. Mr. P; from the merit of this work, which was all the knowledge he had of him, endeavoured to serve him without his own application, and wrote to my Lord Gower, but did not succeed. Mr. Johnson published afterwards another poem in Latin, with notes, the whole very humorous, called the '*Norfolk Prophecy*.'

At the close of the year 1739, the friends of Savage commiserating his case, raised a subscription to enable that unfortunate genius to retire to Swansea; by which means Johnson was parted from his companion, and exempted from many temptations to dissipation and licentiousness, in which he indulged from his attachment to his friend, though contrary to the gravity of his own temper and disposition.

In the years 1740, 41, 42, and 43, he furnished for the '*Gentleman's Magazine*,' a variety of publications, besides the Parliamentary Debates. Among these were the lives of several eminent men; an essay on the account of the conduct of the Duke of Marlborough, then the popular topic of conversation; and an advertisement for Osborne, concerning the '*Bibliotheca Harleiana, or a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford*.'—This was afterwards prefixed to the first volume of the catalogue, in which the Latin account of books was written by him. Mr. Osborne purchased the library for 13,000*l*. a sum which Mr. Oldys says in one of his manuscripts was not more than the binding of the books had cost, yet the slowness of the sale was such, that there was not much gained by it. It has been confidently related with many embellishments, that Johnson knocked Osborne down in his shop with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. Johnson himself relates it differently to Mr. Boswell, 'Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him; but it was not in his shop, it was in my own chamber.' This anecdote has been told to prove Johnson's ferocity; but the matter has been palliated by the friends of Johnson, who imputed it to the arrogant behaviour of the bookseller.

In 1744, he produced the Life of Savage, which he had announced his intention of writing in the '*Gentleman's Magazine*' for August 1743. This work did him infinite honour; being no sooner published, than the following liberal commendation was given of it by Fielding in the '*Cham-*

‘Champion,’ which was copied into the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ for April, and confirmed by the approbation of the public.

‘This pamphlet is, without flattery to its author, as just and well-written a piece, as any of its kind I ever saw. It is certainly penned with equal accuracy and spirit; of which I am so much the better judge, as I know many of the facts to be strictly true and very fairly related. It is a very amusing and withal a very instructive and valuable performance. The author’s observations are short, significant and just, and his narrative remarkably smooth, and well disposed. His reflections open to all the recesses of the human heart; and in a word, a more just or pleasant, a more engaging, or a more instructive treatise in all the excellencies and defects of human nature, is scarce to be found in our own, or perhaps any other language.’——

Johnson, great as his abilities confessedly were, had now lived half his days to very little purpose; he had toiled and laboured, yet as he himself expresses it, it was ‘to provide for the day that was passing over him.’ Sir John Hawkins has preserved a list of literary projects of no less than thirty-nine articles, which he had formed in the course of his studies; but such was his want of encouragement, or the versatility of his temper, that not one of all those projects was ever executed. He now formed a plan for a new edition of Shakespeare; but in this he was anticipated by Warburton, of whose competency for the undertaking the public had then a very high opinion. The preparatory pamphlet however, which Johnson had published upon the occasion, was highly commended by that supercilious churchman, who spoke of it as the work of a man of great parts and genius. Johnson ever acknowledged the obligation with gratitude, ‘He praised me,’ said he, ‘at a time when praise was of value to me.’

In 1746 he formed and digested the plan of his great philological work, which might then be well esteemed one of the desiderata of English literature: It was announced to the public in 1747, in a pamphlet entitled ‘The Plan of a Dictionary of the English language, addressed to the Right Honorable Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, one of his Majesty’s principal secretaries of state.’ The hint of undertaking this work is said to have been first suggested to Johnson by Doddsley, who contracted with him
for

for the execution of it in conjunction with Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messrs. Longman and the two Messrs. Knapton. The price stipulated was 1575*l*. The cause of its being inscribed to Lord Chesterfield is thus related: 'I had neglected,' said Johnson, 'to write it by the time appointed. Doddsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for the delay, that it might be better done, and let Doddsley have his desire.'

To enable him to complete this vast undertaking, he hired a house, fitted up one of the upper rooms after the manner of a counting house, and employed six amanuenses there in transcribing. The words partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them; he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the several passages with a black lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced.

His fortunate pupil Garrick having in the course of this year become joint patentee and manager of Drury Lane theatre, Johnson furnished him with a prologue at the opening of it, which for just and manly criticism, as well as poetical excellence, is unrivalled in that species of composition.

In 1748, he formed a club that met at a chop-house in Ivy Lane every Tuesday evening, with a view to enjoy literary discussion, and the pleasure of animated relaxation. They used to dispute about the moral sense and the fitness of things, but Johnson was not uniform in his opinions, contending as often for victory as for truth. This inclination prevailed with him throughout life.

The year following he published 'The Vanity of Human Wishes, being the tenth Satire of Juvenal imitated,' with his name. This poem is characterized by profound reflection, more than pointed spirit. It has however been always held in high esteem. The instances of the variety of disappointments are chosen so judiciously, and painted so strongly, that the moment they are read, they bring conviction to every thinking mind.

The same year his tragedy of *Irene*, which had long been kept back for want of encouragement, appeared upon the stage

stage at Drury Lane, through the kindness of his friend Garrick. Previous to the representation a violent altercation took place between the author and the manager. Johnson, like too many authors, little acquainted with stage effect, pertinaciously rejected the advice of Garrick, and would by no means submit his lines to the critical amputation of the manager, till at length through the interference of a friend to both parties, he gave way to the proposed alterations, at least in part; and the tragedy was produced.

Before the curtain was drawn up, Johnson's friends were alarmed by the whistling of cat-calls; but the prologue, written by the author in a manly strain, soothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably well till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out—'Murder! murder!'—She several times attempted to speak, but in vain: at last she was obliged to go off the stage alive. This passage was afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, no doubt at the suggestion of Mr. Garrick, to which if the author had attended in time, his compliance might have saved his play. However it is said that he acquiesced without a murmur in the unfavourable decision of the public upon his tragedy, and it appears he was convinced that dramatic writing was not his fort, as he was never known to have made another effort in that species of composition.

On the 20th of March 1750, he published the first paper of the *Rambler*, and continued it without interruption every Tuesday and Friday till the 17th of March 1752, when it closed. In carrying on this periodical publication he seems neither to have courted, nor to have met with much assistance; the papers contributed by others amounting only to five in number. These admirable essays we are told by Mr. Boswell, were written in haste, just as they were wanted for the press, without ever being read over by him before they were printed. The *Rambler* was not successful as a periodical work, not more than five hundred copies of any one number having been ever sold. Soon after the first folio edition was concluded, it was published in four octavo volumes, and the author lived to see a just tribute of approbation paid to its merit in the extensiveness of its sale, ten numerous editions of it having been printed in London,

London, before his death, besides those in Ireland and Scotland.

Sir John Hawkins relates that in the spring of 1751, he indulged himself in a frolic of midnight revelling. This was to celebrate the birth-day of Mrs. Lennox's first literary child, the novel of 'Harriet Stuart.' He drew the members of the Ivy Lane club, and others, to the number of twenty, to the Devil tavern, where Mrs. Lennox and her husband met them. Johnson, after an invocation of the muses, and some other ceremonies of his own invention, invested the authoress with a laurel crown. The festivity was protracted till morning, and Johnson throughout the night was a Bacchanalian without the use of wine.

Though his circumstances at this time were far from being easy; he received as a constant visitor at his house, Miss Anna Williams, daughter of a Welsh physician, and a woman of more than ordinary talents and literature, who had just lost her sight. She had contracted a close intimacy with his wife, and after her death she had an apartment from him at all times when he had a house. In 1755, Garrick gave her a benefit which produced 200*l*. She afterwards published a quarto volume of miscellanies, and thereby increased her little stock to 300*l*. This, and Johnson's protection supported her during the rest of her life.

In 1752 he lost his wife, after a cohabitation of seventeen years, and in this melancholy event felt the most poignant distress. In the interval between her death and burial he composed a funeral sermon for her which was never preached, but being given to a friend, it has been published since his death. The following authentic and artless account of his situation after his wife's death was given to Mr. Boswell, by Francis Barber, his faithful negro-servant, who was brought from Jamaica by Colonel Bathurst, father of his friend Doctor Bathurst, and came into his family about a fortnight after the dismal event.

'He was in great affliction, Miss Williams was then living in his house, which was in Gough Square. He was busy with his dictionary; Mr. Shiels and some others of the gentlemen who had written for him, used to come about him. He had then little for himself, but frequently sent money to Mr. Shiels when in distress. The friends who visited him at that time were chiefly Dr. Bathurst, and Mr. Diamond an apothecary, in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, with whom

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Soon after the *Rambler* ceased, Dr. Hawkesworth projected the *Adventurer*, in conjunction with Bonnel Thornton, Dr. Bathurst, and others. The first number was published 7th November, 1752, and the paper continued twice a week till March 9th, 1754. Thornton's assistance was soon withdrawn, and he set up a new paper in conjunction with Colman called the *Connoisseur*. Johnson was zealous for the success of the *Adventurer*, which was at first rather more popular than the *Rambler*. He engaged the assistance of Dr. Warton, whose admirable essays were well known. Johnson began to write in the *Adventurer* April 10th, 1753, marking his papers with the Signature T. His price was two guineas for each paper. Of all the papers he wrote he gave both the fame and the profit to Dr. Bathurst. Indeed the latter wrote them, while Johnson dictated; tho' he considered it as a point of honour not to own them. He even used to say he did not *write* them, on the pretext that he *dictated* them only, allowing himself by this casuistry to be accessory to the propagation of falsehood, though his conscience had been hurt by even the appearance of imposition in writing the Parliamentary Debates. This year he wrote for Mrs. Lennox the 'Dedication to the Earl of Orrery,' of her *Shakespeare illustrated* in two volumes 12mo.

The death of Mr. Cave, January the 10th, 1754, afforded Johnson an opportunity of shewing his regard for his early patron by writing his life, which was published in the Gentleman's Magazine for February: in the end of July he found leisure to make an excursion to Oxford for the purpose of consulting the libraries there. 'He stayed,' says Mr. Warton, 'about five weeks, but he did not collect any thing in the libraries for his dictionary.'

As the arduous work of the dictionary drew towards a conclusion, Lord Chesterfield, who had treated Johnson

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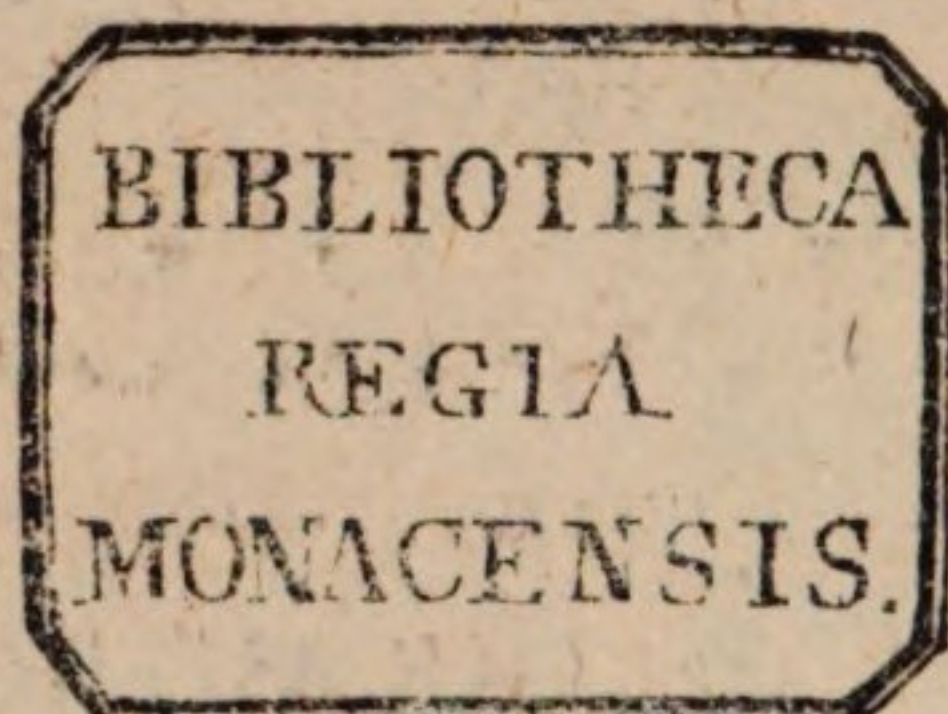
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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

CONTAINING HIS
LONDON: A SATIRE. | PROLOGUES.
VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES. | MISCELLANIES.
ODES, | EPITAPHS.

Et. Et. Et.

Nor was his energy confin'd alone
To friends around his philosophic throne;
His influence wide improv'd our letter'd isle,
And lucid vigour mark'd the general style:
As Nile's proud waves, swoln from their oozy bed,
First o'er the neighb'ring mead majestic spread;
Till, gath'ring force, they more and more expand,
And with due virtue fertilize the land.

Mr. Courtenay's Poetical Review.

London:
PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED
Under the Direction of
C. COOK.

LIFE OF DR. JOHNSON, L. L. D.

THERE is not perhaps in the whole annals of literature, a life which has afforded more events for the detail of the biographer, than that of the very extraordinary character, which is the subject of the following memoirs. As it is natural that the merits and demerits, personal and literary, of a man so eminently distinguished in the departments of biography and criticism as Johnson, should attract the notice and call forth the exertions of numerous writers; it is not to be accounted singular, that besides several slight sketches of his life taken by unknown authors, both favorable and copious narratives should have been presented to the world by Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Tyers, Mrs. Piozzi, Dr. Towers, and Mr. Arthur Murphy; who from their intimate acquaintance with him, were enabled to write from personal knowledge. These several writers, by representing his character in different lights, contrasting his virtues with his faults, and displaying in a variety of anecdotes and incidents, the strength of his mind and the poignancy of his wit, have greatly contributed to the instruction and entertainment of those who are particularly inclined to the reading of biography. Amongst the number specified, the publications of Sir John Hawkins and Mr. Boswell being more elaborately composed, claim a pre-eminence over the rest, and entitle their authors to the appellation of his biographers; while the accounts of the others being compressed by abridgment, are more properly denominated 'Biographical Sketches,' 'Anecdote,' and 'Essays'—The major part of the facts related in the present account, have therefore of course been taken from the narratives of the before mentioned biographers, with the additions of such particulars, as other narratives have been found to supply.

Samuel Johnson was the eldest son of Michael Johnson, a bookseller at Litchfield, in which city this great man was born, on the 7th of September 1709. His mother, Sarah Ford, was the sister of Dr. Joseph Ford, an eminent physician and father of Cornelius Ford, chaplain to Lord
A Chesterfield,

Chesterfield, supposed to be the parson in Hogarth's 'Modern Midnight Conversation'—a man of great parts, but profligate manners—Mrs. Ford was a woman of distinguished understanding, prudence and piety.

As something extraordinary is often related of the infant state of a great genius, we are told by Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins, that at the age of three years Johnson trod by accident upon one of a brood of eleven ducks, and killed it, and upon that occasion made the following verses.

Here lies good master duck,

Whom Samuel Johnson trod on.

If it had liv'd, it had been *good luck*,

For then we'd had an *odd one*.

But very extraordinary must be that credulity, that can admit of these verses being the production of a child of such an early age; credulity however is relieved from the burthen of doubt by Johnson's having himself assured Mr. Boswell, that they were made by his father who wished them to pass for his son's. He added, 'my father was a foolish old man, that is to say, foolish in talking of his children.'

Johnson was initiated in classical learning at the free school of his native city, under the tuition of Mr. Hunter, and having afterwards resided some time at the house of his cousin Cornelius Ford, who assisted him in the classics, he was by his advice at the age of fifteen removed to the school of Stourbridge in Worcestershire, of which Mr. Wentworth was then master, whom he has described as 'a very able man, but an idle man; and to him unreasonably severe.'—Parson Ford he has described in his life of Tonten, as 'a clergyman at that time too well known, whose abilities, instead of furnishing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and the dissolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wise.'

On the 31st of October 1728, he was entered a commoner of Pembroke College, Oxford, being then in his nineteenth year. Of his tutor Mr. Jourden, he gave the following account. 'He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not profit much by his instruction; indeed I did not attend him much.' He had however, a love and respect for Jourden, not for his literature, but
for

for his worth. 'Whenever,' said he, 'a young man becomes Jourden's pupil, he becomes his son.'

In the year 1730, Mr. Corbet a young gentleman whom Johnson had accompanied to Oxford as a companion, left the University, and his father, to whom according to the account of Sir John Hawkins, Johnson trusted for support, declined contributing any farther to that purpose; and as his father's business was by no means lucrative, his remittances were consequently too small to supply even the decencies of external appearance. Thus unfortunately situated, he was under the necessity of quitting the University without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three years. This was a circumstance which in the subsequent part of his life he had occasion to regret, as an obstacle to his obtaining a settlement, whence he might have derived that subsistence which he could not procure by any other means.

In December 1731, his father died, in the 79th year of his age, in very narrow circumstances, so that for present support, he condescended to accept the employment of usher, in the free grammar-school at Market Bosworth in Leicestershire, which he relinquished in a short time, and went to reside at Birmingham, where he derived considerable benefit from several of his literary productions.

Notwithstanding the apparent austerity of his temper, he was by no means insensible to the power of female charms; when at Stourbridge school he was much enamoured of Olivia Lloyd, a young quaker, to whom he addressed a copy of verses. In 1735 he became the warm admirer of Mrs. Porter, widow of Mr. Henry Porter, mercer in Birmingham. 'It was,' he said, 'a love match on both sides,' and judging from a description of their persons, we must suppose that the passion was not inspired by the beauties of form or graces of manner; but by a mutual admiration of each others minds. Johnson's appearance is described as very forbidding. 'He was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrophula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair which was straight and stiff, and separated behind; and he had seemingly convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended at once to excite surprise and ridicule.' Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson, and her person and manner as
A 2 described

described by Garrick were by no means pleasing to others. 'She was,' he says, 'very fat, with a bosom of more than ordinary protuberance. Her swelled cheeks were of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increased by the liberal use of cordials; she was flaring and fantastic in her dress, and affected both in her speech and her general behaviour.' It was beyond a doubt, however, that whatever her real charms might have been, in the eye of her husband she was extremely beautiful, for in her epitaph he has recorded her as such, and given many instances in his writings of a sincere and permanent affection.

With the property he acquired with his wife, which is supposed to have amounted to about 800l. he attempted to establish a boarding school for young gentlemen at Edial, near Litchfield; but the plan proved abortive, the only pupils put under his care, were Garrick, the celebrated English Roscius, his brother George, and a Mr. Offely a young gentleman of good fortune, who died early.* Disappointed in his expectation of deriving a subsistence from the establishment of a boarding school, he set out on the 2d of March, 1737, being then in the 28th year of his age, for London; and it is a memorable circumstance, that his pupil Garrick went there at the same time, with an intention to complete his education, and follow the profession of the law. They were recommended to Mr. Colson, master of the mathematical school at Rochester, by a letter from a friend, who mentions the joint expedition of these two eminent men to the metropolis in the following manner.

'This young gentleman and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. Samuel Johnson, set out this morning together for London. Davy Garrick is to be with you early next week, and Mr. Johnson to try his fate with a tragedy, and endeavour to get himself employed in some translation, either from the Latin or the French. Johnson is a very good scholar, and I have great hopes he will turn out a fine tragedy writer.' In London he found it necessary to practise the most rigid œconomy, and his *Osellus* in the *Art of Living in London*, is the real character of an Irish painter,

* About this time he was assiduously engaged in his tragedy called *Irene*, with which his friends were so well pleased that they advised him to proceed with it. It is founded upon a passage in Smollet's *History of the Turks*, a book which he afterwards highly praised and recommended in the *Rambler*.

who initiated him in the mode of living cheaply in London. Here he experienced the kindness and hospitality of Mr. Hervey, one of the branches of the Bristol family; and ever after retained a grateful sense of the services he rendered him. Not very long before his death, he thus described this early friend, 'Harry Hervey, he was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog *Hervey* I shall love him.'

In three months after he came to London, his tragedy being as he thought completely finished, and fit for the stage, he solicited Mr. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre to bring it out at his house; but Mr. Fleetwood declined receiving it. Soon after he was employed by Mr. Cave, as a co-adjutor in his magazine, which for some years was his principal resource for support. His first performance in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' was a Latin Ode, *Ad Urbanum*, in March 1738; a translation of which by an unknown correspondent appeared in the Magazine for May following.

At this period the misconduct and misfortunes of Savage had reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness, as a writer for bread; and his visits at St. John's Gate, where the 'Gentleman's Magazine' was originally printed, naturally brought Johnson and him together, and as they both possessed great abilities, and were equally under the pressure of want, they had naturally a fellow feeling; so that in a short time the strictest intimacy subsisted between them. Johnson mentioned to Sir Joshua Reynolds some of their whimsical adventures in an early life, and in his writings describes Savage as having a 'graceful and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which upon a nearer acquaintance softened into an engaging easiness of manners.' How much he admired his friend Savage, for that knowledge of letters which he himself so much cultivated, and what kindness he entertained for him is evident, from some verses he wrote for the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' for April 1738.

About the same time he became acquainted with Miss Elizabeth Carter, the learned translator of *Epicætetus*, to whom he shewed particular tokens of respect, and in the same magazine complimented her in an *Ænigma* to Eliza, both in Greek and Latin. He writes Mr. Cave, 'I think she ought to be celebrated in as many different languages as Lewis Le Grand.'

In May 1738, he published his *London, a Poem*, written in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal. It has been generally said that he offered it to several booksellers, none of whom would purchase it. Mr. Cave at length communicated it to Doddsley, who had judgment enough to discern its intrinsic merit, and thought it creditable to be concerned in it. Doddsley gave him ten pounds for the copy. It is remarkable that it came out on the same morning with Pope's Satire, entitled 'One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight.' Pope was so struck with its merit, that he sought to discover the author, and prophesied his future fame, and from his note to Lord Gower, it seems that he was successful in his enquiries. From a short extract in the Gentleman's Magazine for May, it appears that the poem got to the second edition in the space of a week. Indeed this admirable production laid the foundation of Johnson's fame.

In the course of his engagement with Cave, he composed the *Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia*, the first number of which appeared in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for June 1738, sometimes with feigned names of the several speakers, with denominations formed of the letters of their real names, so that they might be easily decyphered. Parliament then kept the press in a kind of mysterious awe, which rendered it necessary to have recourse to such devices. The debates for some time were taken and digested by Guthrie, and afterwards sent by Mr. Cave to Johnson for revision: when Guthrie afterwards was engaged in a diversity of employment, and the speeches were more enriched by the accession of Johnson's genius; it was resolved that he should do the whole himself from notes furnished by persons employed to attend in both houses of parliament. His sole composition of them began November 19, 1740, and ended February 23d, 1742-3. From that time they were written by Hawkesworth to the year 1760.

He derived however, so little emolument from his literary productions, that notwithstanding the success of his *London*, he was willing to accept of an offer made him of becoming master of a free school, at a salary of sixty pounds a year; but as the statutes of the school required that he should be a Master of Arts, he was under the necessity of declining it. It is said of Pope to his honour, that without any knowledge of Johnson but from his *London*, he recommended

mended him to Lord Gower, who by a letter to a friend of Swift endeavoured to procure him a degree from Trinity College Dublin; but the expedient failed, and it is supposed that Swift declined to interfere in the business; to which circumstance Johnson's known dislike to Swift has been often imputed.

Thus disappointed, he was under the necessity of persevering in that course into which he was forced, and therefore resumed his design of translating Father Paul's *History of the Council of Trent* in two volumes quarto, which were announced in the 'Weekly Miscellany, Oct. 21st, 1738. Though twelve sheets of this translation were printed off, Johnson was unfortunately frustrated in his design; for it happened that another Samuel Johnson, librarian of St. Martin in the Fields, and curate of that parish, had engaged in the same undertaking, under the patronage of the learned Dr. Pearce, the consequence of which was an opposition, that destroyed the productive effects of both the works.

In the same year he took part in the opposition to the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, and published a pamphlet entitled, *Marmor Norfolciense* by *Probus Britannicus*, in which he inveighed against the Brunswick succession and the measures of government consequent upon it, with the most intemperate zeal, and pointed sarcasm. Sir John Hawkins says, that the jacobite principles inculcated in this pamphlet aroused the vigilance of the ministry, and that a warrant was issued and messengers employed to apprehend the author, who it seems was known; but that he eluded their search, by retiring to an obscure lodging in Lambeth Marsh. Mr. Boswell denies the authenticity of this story, alledging that Mr. Steele, one of the secretaries of the treasury, had directed every possible search to be made in the records of the treasury, and secretary of state's office; but could find no trace of any warrant having been issued to apprehend the author of this pamphlet.

This jacobitical production obtained the sanction of the Tory party in general, and of Pope in particular, as appears from the following note concerning Johnson, copied with minute exactness by Mr. Boswell from the original, in the possession of Dr. Percy.

'This [*London*] is imitated by one Johnson, who put up for a public school in Shropshire, but was disappointed.

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He has an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes, so as to make him a sad spectacle. Mr. P; from the merit of this work, which was all the knowledge he had of him, endeavoured to serve him without his own application, and wrote to my Lord Gower, but did not succeed. Mr. Johnson published afterwards another poem in Latin, with notes, the whole very humorous, called the '*Norfolk Prophecy.*'

At the close of the year 1739, the friends of Savage commiserating his case, raised a subscription to enable that unfortunate genius to retire to Swansea; by which means Johnson was parted from his companion, and exempted from many temptations to dissipation and licentiousness, in which he indulged from his attachment to his friend, though contrary to the gravity of his own temper and disposition.

In the years 1740, 41, 42, and 43, he furnished for the '*Gentleman's Magazine,*' a variety of publications, besides the Parliamentary Debates. Among these were the lives of several eminent men; an essay on the account of the conduct of the Duke of Marlborough, then the popular topic of conversation; and an advertisement for Osborne, concerning the '*Bibliotheca Harleiana, or a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford.*'—This was afterwards prefixed to the first volume of the catalogue, in which the Latin account of books was written by him. Mr. Osborne purchased the library for 13,000*l.* a sum which Mr. Oldys says in one of his manuscripts was not more than the binding of the books had cost, yet the slowness of the sale was such, that there was not much gained by it. It has been confidently related with many embellishments, that Johnson knocked Osborne down in his shop with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. Johnson himself relates it differently to Mr. Boswell, '*Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him; but it was not in his shop, it was in my own chamber.*' This anecdote has been told to prove Johnson's ferocity; but the matter has been palliated by the friends of Johnson, who imputed it to the arrogant behaviour of the bookseller.

In 1744, he produced the Life of Savage, which he had announced his intention of writing in the '*Gentleman's Magazine*' for August 1743. This work did him infinite honour; being no sooner published, than the following liberal commendation was given of it by Fielding in the '*Cham.*'

‘Champion,’ which was copied into the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ for April, and confirmed by the approbation of the public.

‘This pamphlet is, without flattery to its author, as just and well-written a piece, as any of its kind I ever saw. It is certainly penned with equal accuracy and spirit; of which I am so much the better judge, as I know many of the facts to be strictly true and very fairly related. It is a very amusing and withal a very instructive and valuable performance. The author’s observations are short, significant and just, and his narrative remarkably smooth, and well disposed. His reflections open to all the recesses of the human heart; and in a word, a more just or pleasant, a more engaging, or a more instructive treatise in all the excellencies and defects of human nature, is scarce to be found in our own, or perhaps any other language.’——

Johnson, great as his abilities confessedly were, had now lived half his days to very little purpose; he had toiled and laboured, yet as he himself expresses it, it was ‘to provide for the day that was passing over him.’ Sir John Hawkins has preserved a list of literary projects of no less than thirty-nine articles, which he had formed in the course of his studies; but such was his want of encouragement, or the versatility of his temper, that not one of all those projects was ever executed. He now formed a plan for a new edition of Shakespeare; but in this he was anticipated by Warburton, of whose competency for the undertaking the public had then a very high opinion. The preparatory pamphlet however, which Johnson had published upon the occasion, was highly commended by that supercilious churchman, who spoke of it as the work of a man of great parts and genius. Johnson ever acknowledged the obligation with gratitude, ‘He praised me,’ said he, ‘at a time when praise was of value to me.’

In 1746 he formed and digested the plan of his great philological work, which might then be well esteemed one of the desiderata of English literature: It was announced to the public in 1747, in a pamphlet entitled ‘The Plan of a Dictionary of the English language, addressed to the Right Honorable Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, one of his Majesty’s principal secretaries of state.’ The hint of undertaking this work is said to have been first suggested to Johnson by Doddsley, who contracted with him
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In May 1738, he published his *London, a Poem*, written in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal. It has been generally said that he offered it to several booksellers, none of whom would purchase it. Mr. Cave at length communicated it to Dodsley, who had judgment enough to discern its intrinsic merit, and thought it creditable to be concerned in it. Dodsley gave him ten pounds for the copy. It is remarkable that it came out on the same morning with Pope's Satire, entitled 'One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight.' Pope was so struck with its merit, that he sought to discover the author, and prophesied his future fame, and from his note to Lord Gower, it seems that he was successful in his enquiries. From a short extract in the Gentleman's Magazine for May, it appears that the poem got to the second edition in the space of a week. Indeed this admirable production laid the foundation of Johnson's fame.

In the course of his engagement with Cave, he composed the *Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia*, the first number of which appeared in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for June 1738, sometimes with feigned names of the several speakers, with denominations formed of the letters of their real names, so that they might be easily decyphered. Parliament then kept the press in a kind of mysterious awe, which rendered it necessary to have recourse to such devices. The debates for some time were taken and digested by Guthrie, and afterwards sent by Mr. Cave to Johnson for revision: when Guthrie afterwards was engaged in a diversity of employment, and the speeches were more enriched by the accession of Johnson's genius; it was resolved that he should do the whole himself from notes furnished by persons employed to attend in both houses of parliament. His sole composition of them began November 19, 1740, and ended February 23d, 1742-3. From that time they were written by Hawkesworth to the year 1760.

He derived however, so little emolument from his literary productions, that notwithstanding the success of his *London*, he was willing to accept of an offer made him of becoming master of a free school, at a salary of sixty pounds a year; but as the statutes of the school required that he should be a Master of Arts, he was under the necessity of declining it. It is said of Pope to his honour, that without any knowledge of Johnson but from his *London*, he recommended

mended him to Lord Gower, who by a letter to a friend of Swift endeavoured to procure him a degree from Trinity College Dublin; but the expedient failed, and it is supposed that Swift declined to interfere in the business; to which circumstance Johnson's known dislike to Swift has been often imputed.

Thus disappointed, he was under the necessity of persevering in that course into which he was forced, and therefore resumed his design of translating Father Paul's *History of the Council of Trent* in two volumes quarto, which were announced in the 'Weekly Miscellany, Oct. 21st, 1738. Though twelve sheets of this translation were printed off, Johnson was unfortunately frustrated in his design; for it happened that another Samuel Johnson, librarian of St. Martin in the Fields, and curate of that parish, had engaged in the same undertaking, under the patronage of the learned Dr. Pearce, the consequence of which was an opposition, that destroyed the productive effects of both the works.

In the same year he took part in the opposition to the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, and published a pamphlet entitled, *Marmor Norfolciense* by *Probus Britannicus*, in which he inveighed against the Brunswick succession and the measures of government consequent upon it, with the most intemperate zeal, and pointed sarcasm. Sir John Hawkins says, that the jacobite principles inculcated in this pamphlet aroused the vigilance of the ministry, and that a warrant was issued and messengers employed to apprehend the author, who it seems was known; but that he eluded their search, by retiring to an obscure lodging in Lambeth Marsh. Mr. Boswell denies the authenticity of this story, alledging that Mr. Steele, one of the secretaries of the treasury, had directed every possible search to be made in the records of the treasury, and secretary of state's office; but could find no trace of any warrant having been issued to apprehend the author of this pamphlet.

This jacobitical production obtained the sanction of the Tory party in general, and of Pope in particular, as appears from the following note concerning Johnson, copied with minute exactness by Mr. Boswell from the original, in the possession of Dr. Percy.

' This [*London*] is imitated by one Johnson, who put up for a public school in Shropshire, but was disappointed.

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He has an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes, so as to make him a sad spectacle. Mr. P. from the merit of this work, which was all the knowledge he had of him, endeavoured to serve him without his own application, and wrote to my Lord Gower, but did not succeed. Mr. Johnson published afterwards another poem in Latin, with notes, the whole very humorous, called the '*Norfolk Prophecy*.'

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for the execution of it in conjunction with Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messrs. Longman and the two Messrs. Knapton. The price stipulated was 1575l. The cause of its being inscribed to Lord Chesterfield is thus related: 'I had neglected,' said Johnson, 'to write it by the time appointed. Doddsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for the delay, that it might be better done, and let Doddsley have his desire.'

To enable him to complete this vast undertaking, he hired a house, fitted up one of the upper rooms after the manner of a counting house, and employed six amanuenses there in transcribing. The words partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them; he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the several passages with a black lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced.

His fortunate pupil Garrick having in the course of this year become joint patentee and manager of Drury Lane theatre, Johnson furnished him with a prologue at the opening of it, which for just and manly criticism, as well as poetical excellence, is unrivalled in that species of composition.

In 1748, he formed a club that met at a chop-house in Ivy Lane every Tuesday evening, with a view to enjoy literary discussion, and the pleasure of animated relaxation. They used to dispute about the moral sense and the fitness of things, but Johnson was not uniform in his opinions, contending as often for victory as for truth. This inclination prevailed with him throughout life.

The year following he published 'The Vanity of Human Wishes, being the tenth Satire of Juvenal imitated,' with his name. This poem is characterized by profound reflection, more than pointed spirit. It has however been always held in high esteem. The instances of the variety of disappointments are chosen so judiciously, and painted so strongly, that the moment they are read, they bring conviction to every thinking mind.

The same year his tragedy of *Irene*, which had long been kept back for want of encouragement, appeared upon the stage

stage at Drury Lane, through the kindness of his friend Garrick. Previous to the representation a violent altercation took place between the author and the manager. Johnson, like too many authors, little acquainted with stage effect, pertinaciously rejected the advice of Garrick, and would by no means submit his lines to the critical amputation of the manager, till at length through the interference of a friend to both parties, he gave way to the proposed alterations, at least in part; and the tragedy was produced.

Before the curtain was drawn up, Johnson's friends were alarmed by the whistling of cat-calls; but the prologue, written by the author in a manly strain, soothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably well till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out—'Murder! murder!'—She several times attempted to speak, but in vain: at last she was obliged to go off the stage alive. This passage was afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, no doubt at the suggestion of Mr. Garrick, to which if the author had attended in time, his compliance might have saved his play. However it is said that he acquiesced without a murmur in the unfavourable decision of the public upon his tragedy, and it appears he was convinced that dramatic writing was not his fort, as he was never known to have made another effort in that species of composition.

On the 20th of March 1750, he published the first paper of the *Rambler*, and continued it without interruption every Tuesday and Friday till the 17th of March 1752, when it closed. In carrying on this periodical publication he seems neither to have courted, nor to have met with much assistance; the papers contributed by others amounting only to five in number. These admirable essays we are told by Mr. Boswell, were written in haste, just as they were wanted for the press, without ever being read over by him before they were printed. The *Rambler* was not successful as a periodical work, not more than five hundred copies of any one number having been ever sold. Soon after the first folio edition was concluded, it was published in four octavo volumes, and the author lived to see a just tribute of approbation paid to its merit in the extensiveness of its sale, ten numerous editions of it having been printed in London,

London, before his death, besides those in Ireland and Scotland.

Sir John Hawkins relates that in the spring of 1751, he indulged himself in a frolic of midnight revelling. This was to celebrate the birth-day of Mrs. Lennox's first literary child, the novel of 'Harriet Stuart.' He drew the members of the Ivy Lane club, and others, to the number of twenty, to the Devil tavern, where Mrs. Lennox and her husband met them. Johnson, after an invocation of the muses, and some other ceremonies of his own invention, invested the authoress with a laurel crown. The festivity was protracted till morning, and Johnson throughout the night was a Bacchanalian without the use of wine.

Though his circumstances at this time were far from being easy; he received as a constant visitor at his house, Miss Anna Williams, daughter of a Welsh physician, and a woman of more than ordinary talents and literature, who had just lost her sight. She had contracted a close intimacy with his wife, and after her death she had an apartment from him at all times when he had a house. In 1755, Garrick gave her a benefit which produced 200*l*. She afterwards published a quarto volume of miscellanies, and thereby increased her little stock to 300*l*. This, and Johnson's protection supported her during the rest of her life.

In 1752 he lost his wife, after a cohabitation of seventeen years, and in this melancholy event felt the most poignant distress. In the interval between her death and burial he composed a funeral sermon for her which was never preached, but being given to a friend, it has been published since his death. The following authentic and artless account of his situation after his wife's death was given to Mr. Boswell, by Francis Barber, his faithful negro-servant, who was brought from Jamaica by Colonel Bathurst, father of his friend Doctor Bathurst, and came into his family about a fortnight after the dismal event.

'He was in great affliction, Miss Williams was then living in his house, which was in Gough Square. He was busy with his dictionary; Mr. Shiels and some others of the gentlemen who had written for him, used to come about him. He had then little for himself, but frequently sent money to Mr. Shiels when in distress. The friends who visited him at that time were chiefly Dr. Bathurst, and Mr. Diamond an apothecary, in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, with whom

whom he and Miss Williams generally dined every Sunday. There were also Mr. Cave, Dr. Hawkesworth, Mrs. Masters, the poetess who lived with Mrs. Cave, Mr. Carter, and sometimes Mrs. Macaulay; Mr. (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds, Mr. Millar, Mr. Doddsley, Mr. Payne, Mr. Strahan, the Earl of Orrery, Lord Southwell and Mr. Garrick.' Johnson seems to have sought a remedy for the deprivation of domestic society in the loss of his wife, in the company of this circle of his acquaintance, who conceived for him the most sincere veneration and esteem.

Soon after the *Rambler* ceased, Dr. Hawkesworth projected the *Adventurer*, in conjunction with Bonnel Thornton, Dr. Bathurst, and others. The first number was published 7th November, 1752, and the paper continued twice a week till March 9th, 1754. Thornton's assistance was soon withdrawn, and he set up a new paper in conjunction with Colman called the *Connaisseur*. Johnson was zealous for the success of the *Adventurer*, which was at first rather more popular than the *Rambler*. He engaged the assistance of Dr. Warton, whose admirable essays were well known. Johnson began to write in the *Adventurer* April 10th, 1753, marking his papers with the Signature T. His price was two guineas for each paper. Of all the papers he wrote he gave both the fame and the profit to Dr. Bathurst. Indeed the latter wrote them, while Johnson dictated; tho' he considered it as a point of honour not to own them. He even used to say he did not *write* them, on the pretext that he *dictated* them only, allowing himself by this casuistry to be accessory to the propagation of falsehood, though his conscience had been hurt by even the appearance of imposition in writing the Parliamentary Debates. This year he wrote for Mrs. Lennox the 'Dedication to the Earl of Orrery,' of her *Shakespeare illustrated* in two volumes 12mo.

The death of Mr. Cave, January the 10th, 1754, afforded Johnson an opportunity of shewing his regard for his early patron by writing his life, which was published in the Gentleman's Magazine for February: in the end of July he found leisure to make an excursion to Oxford for the purpose of consulting the libraries there. 'He stayed,' says Mr. Warton, 'about five weeks, but he did not collect any thing in the libraries for his dictionary.'

As the arduous work of the dictionary drew towards a conclusion, Lord Chesterfield, who had treated Johnson

with great contempt, now meanly condescended to court a reconciliation with him, in hopes of being immortalized in a dedication. With this view he wrote two essays in the "World," in praise of the dictionary, and according to Sir John Hawkins, sent Sir Thomas Robinson to him for the same purpose. But Johnson rejected the advances of the noble Lord, and spurned his profered patronage, in the following letter, which is worthy of being preserved, as it affords the noblest lesson to both patrons and authors that stands upon record in the annals of literary history.

' I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the "World," that two papers in which my dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be distinguished is an honour, which being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

' When upon some slight encouragement I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered like the rest of mankind by your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*, that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

' Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

' The Shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

' Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed
till

till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations, where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

‘Having carried on my work thus far, with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

My Lord, your's, &c. &c.

Johnson however acknowledged, to a friend, that he once received ten pounds from Lord Chesterfield; but as that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find place in a letter of the kind that this was. Lord Chesterfield read the letter to Doddsley with an air of indifference, smiled at the several passages, and observed how well they were expressed. He excused his neglect of Johnson, by saying that he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived, and declared he would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he knew that he had denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome. Of Lord Chesterfield's general affability and easiness of access, especially to literary men, the evidence is unquestionable; but of the character which he gave of Johnson in his letters to his son, and the difference in their manners, little union or friendship could be looked for between them. Certain it is however, that Johnson remained under an obligation to his lordship to the value of ten pounds.

Though he failed in an attempt, at an early period of life, to obtain the degree of Master of Arts; the university of Oxford, a short time before the publication of his dictionary, in anticipation of the excellence of the work, and at the solicitation of his friend Mr. Warton, unanimously presented it to him; and it was considered as an honour of considerable importance in the introduction of the work to the notice of the public.

At length in the month of May 1754, appeared his ‘Dictionary of the English Language, with an History of the Language, and an English Grammar, in two volumes,

folio.' It was received by the learned world, who had long wished for its appearance, with a degree of applause, proportionable to the impatience which the promise of it had excited. Though we may believe him in the declaration at the end of his preface, that he dismissed it with frigid tranquility, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise; there cannot be a doubt but that he was highly gratified by the reputation it acquired both at home and abroad. The Earl of Corke and Orrery, being at Florence, presented it to the *Accademia della Crusca*. The academy sent Johnson their *Vocabulario*, and the French Academy sent him their *Dictionnaire* by Mr. Langton.

Johnson, as though he had foreseen some of the circumstances which would attend the publication of this arduous work, observes, 'A few wild blunders and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt; but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there can never be wanting some who distinguish desert.' Among those who amused themselves and the public on this occasion, Mr. Wilkes, in an essay printed in the public advertiser, ridiculed the following passage in the *Grammar*, 'H seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable.' The remark is certainly too definite; but the author never altered the passage. Dr. Kenrick threatened an attack, several years after, in his *Review of Johnson's Shakespeare*, but it was never carried into execution. *Campbell's Lexiphanes*, published in 1767, and *Callender's Deformities of Dr. Johnson*, in 1782, may have some point and tendency to risibility, but in the opinion of a scholar must be insignificant and nugatory. It would be doing injustice to the memory of his old friend and pupil Garrick, to omit the following epigram, with which he complimented our learned author on the first appearance of his dictionary. It is happily allusive to the ill success of the forty members of the French Academy employed in settling their language.

'Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance
That one English soldier will beat ten of France;
Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
Our odds are still greater, still greater our men;
In the deep mines of science, tho' Frenchmen may toil,
Can their strength be compar'd to Locke, Newton, and
Boyle? Let

Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their powers,
 Their verse-men and prose-men, then match them with ours;
 First Shakespeare and Milton, like gods in the fight,
 Have put their whole drama and epic to flight;
 In satires, epistles, and odes would they cope,
 Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope;
 And Johnson well-armed like a hero of yore,
 Has beat *forty* French, and will beat forty more.'

Our author having spent, during the progress of his laborious work, the money for which he had contracted to execute it, was still under the necessity of exerting his talents, as he himself expresses it, in making provision for the day that was passing over him. The subscriptions taken in for his edition of Shakespeare, and the profits of his miscellaneous essays, were now his principal resource for subsistence; and it appears from the following letter to Mr. Richardson, dated Gough Square, March 16, 1756, that they were not sufficient to ward off the distress of an arrest on a particular emergency.

'I am obliged to entreat your assistance; I am now under an arrest for five pounds eighteen shillings; Mr. Strahan from whom I should have received the necessary help in this case is not at home, and I am afraid of not finding Mr. Millar. If you could be so good as to send me this sum, I will very gratefully repay you, and add it to all former obligations.' In the margin of this letter there is a memorandum in these words.—'March 16, 1756. Sent six guineas, Witness William Richardson.'

The same year he engaged to superintend, and contribute largely, to another monthly publication, entitled—'The Literary Magazine, or Universal Review.' For this periodical work, he wrote original essays, and critical reviews: his essays evince extensive reading and sound judgment: some of his reviews are short accounts of the productions noticed, but many of them are examples of elaborate criticism in the most masterly style. About this period he was offered by a particular friend, a church living of considerable value in Lincolnshire, if he would take orders and accept it; but he chose to decline the clerical function. This year the Ivy Lane club was dissolved by the dispersion of the members.

In April 1758, he began the *Idler*, which appeared statedly in a weekly newspaper, called—'The Universal Chronicle,'

nicle,' and was continued till April 1760. The *Idler* evidently appeared to be the production of the same genius as the *Rambler*; but it has more of real life as well as ease of language.

Soon after the death of his mother, which happened in the beginning of 1759, he wrote his *Rasselas*, Prince of Abyssinia, that with the profits he might defray the expence of her funeral, and pay some little debts which he had contracted. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he composed it in the evenings of one week, sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over. He received for the copy 100l.; and 25l. when it came to a second edition. The applause with which this work was received, bore ample testimony to its merit; indeed, its reception was such that it has been translated into various modern languages, and admitted into the politest libraries of Europe.

In 1760, Mr. Murphy conceiving himself illiberally treated by Dr. Franklin, a cotemporary writer in his *Dissertation on Tragedy*, published an animated vindication of himself, in a Poetical Epistle to Samuel Johnson, A. M. in which he complimented Johnson in a just and elegant manner. An acquaintance first commenced between Johnson and Mr. Murphy in the following manner. Mr. Murphy during the publication of his '*Gray's Inn Journal*,' happened to be in the country with Foote, the modern Aristophanes, and having mentioned that he was obliged to go London, to get ready for the press one of the numbers; Foote said to him—'You need not go on that account. Here is a French magazine, in which you will find a very pretty oriental tale; translate that and send it to your printer. Mr. Murphy having read the tale was highly pleased with it, and followed Foote's advice. When he arrived in town, this tale was pointed out to him in the *Rambler*, from whence it had been translated into the French magazine. Mr. Murphy then waited upon Johnson to explain this curious incident, and a friendship was formed between them that continued without interruption till the death of Johnson.

In 1762, Fortune, which had hitherto left our author to struggle with the inconveniences of a precarious subsistence, arising entirely from his own labours, gave him that independence which his literary talents certainly deserved. His present Majesty, in the month of July, granted

granted him a pension of 300l. per annum, as a recompence for the honour which the excellence of his writings had been to these kingdoms. He obtained it through the interference of the Earl of Bute, then First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, upon the suggestion of Mr. Wedderburn, now Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, at the instance of Mr. Murphy and the late Mr. Sheridan, father of the present proprietor of Drury Lane theatre, and eminent for his Lectures on Oratory, as well as Dictionary of the English Language. Johnson from this circumstance was censured by some as an apostate, and ridiculed by others for becoming a pensioner. The North Briton was furnished with arguments against the minister for rewarding a Tory and a Jacobite; and Churchill satirized his political versatility with the most poignant severity in the four following lines.

‘ How to all principles untrue,
Not fix’d to old friends, nor to new,
He damns the pension which he takes,
And loves the Stuart he forsakes.’

His acceptance of the royal bounty undoubtedly subjected him to the appellation of pensioner, to which he had annexed an ignominious definition in his dictionary. It is with great propriety remarked upon this occasion, that—‘ having received a favour from two Scotchmen, against whose country he joined in the rabble cry of indiscriminate invective; it was thus that even-handed Justice commended the poisoned chalice to his own lips, and compelled him to an awkward, though not unpleasant penance, for indulging in a splenetic prejudice equally unworthy of his head and heart.’

In 1763, Mr. Boswell, from whose account the principal circumstances in these memoirs are taken, was introduced to our author, and continued to live in great intimacy with him from that time till his death.

Churchill in his ‘ Ghost,’ availed himself of the common opinion of Johnson’s credulity, and drew a caricature of him under the name of *Pomposo*, representing him as one of the believers of the story of a ghost in Cock Lane, which in 1762 had gained very great credit in London. Johnson made no reply, for it seems that with other wise folks he sat up with the ghost. Contrary however to the common opinion of Johnson’s credulity, Mr. Boswell

well asserts that he was a principal agent in detecting the imposture; and undeceived the world by publishing an account of it in the Gentleman's Magazine for January 1762.

In February 1764, to enlarge the circle of his literary acquaintance, and afford opportunities for conversation, he founded a society which afterwards became distinguished by the title of the *Literary Club*, and Sir Joshua Reynolds was the first proposer, to which Johnson acceded, and the original members were, besides himself, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Sir John Hawkins, and Goldsmith. They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, Soho, on every Monday throughout the year.

The succeeding year, 1765, was remarkable for the commencement of his acquaintance with Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and member of parliament for Southwark. Mr. Murphy who was intimate with Mr. Thrale, having spoken very highly of Johnson's conversation, he was requested to make them acquainted. This being mentioned to Johnson, he accepted of an invitation to dinner at Mr. Thrale's, and was so much pleased with his reception both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they were so much pleased with him, that his invitations to their house became more and more frequent, till, in course of time he ranked as one of the family, and an apartment was appropriated to him both in their house at Southwark, and at their villa at Streatham. Nothing could be more fortunate for Johnson than this connection. He had at the house of his friend all the comforts and even luxuries of life, his melancholy was diverted, and his irregular habits lessened, by association with an agreeable and well ordered family, by whom he was treated with the utmost respect and even affection; and it is recorded to the honour of his worthy friend, that the patron of literature and talents, of which Johnson sought in vain for the traces in Chesterfield, he found realized in Thrale.

In the course of this year he was complimented by the University of Dublin with the degree of Doctor of Laws, as the diploma expresses it, *ob egregium scriptorum elegantiam et utilitatem*, though he does not appear to have taken the title in consequence of it. Soon after, he published his edition of 'The Plays of William Shakespeare, with the Corrections and Illustrations of various Commentators, to which

which are added Notes by Samuel Johnson,' octavo. Sir John Hawkins thinks it a meagre work, he complains of the paucity of the notes, and Johnson's unfitness for the office of a scholiast. It was treated with great illiberality by Dr. Kenrick in the first part of a 'Review' of it, which was never completed. But it must be acknowledged that what he did as a commentator has no small share of merit. He has enriched his edition with a concise account of each play, and of its characteristic excellence. In the sagacity of his emendatory criticisms, and the happiness of his interpretation of obscure passages, he surpasses every other editor of this poet. Mr. Malone confesses that Johnson's vigorous and comprehensive understanding, threw more light on this author than all his predecessor had done. His preface has been pronounced by Mr. Malone to be the finest composition in our language; and it must be admitted, whether we consider the beauty and vigour of its composition, the abundance and classical selection of its allusions, the justness of the general precepts of criticism, and its accurate estimates of the excellence or defects of its author, it is equally admirable.

In February, 1767, our author was honoured by a private conversation with the king in the library at Buckingham house, which, as pointedly expressed by one of his biographers, gratified his monarchic enthusiasm. The interview was sought by the king without the knowledge of Johnson. His majesty, among other things, asked the author of so many valuable works, if he intended to publish any more. Johnson modestly answered, that he thought he had written enough. 'And so should I too,' replied the king, 'if you had not written so well.' Johnson was highly pleased with his majesty's courteousness, and afterwards observed to a friend—'Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman, as we may suppose Louis XIV. or Charles II.

In 1770, he published a political pamphlet, entitled *The False Alarm*, intended to justify the conduct of ministry, and the majority of the House of Commons, for having virtually assumed it as an axiom, that the expulsion of a member of parliament was equivalent to an exclusion; and their having declared Colonel Luttrell to be duly elected for the county of Middlesex, notwithstanding Mr. Wilkes had a great majority of votes. This being considered as a
gross

gross violation of the right of election, an alarm for the constitution extended itself all over the kingdom. To prove this alarm to be false, was the purpose of Johnson's pamphlet; but his arguments failed of effect, and the House of Commons has since erased the offensive resolution from the Journals. This pamphlet has great merit in point of language, but it contains much gross misrepresentation, and much malignity, and abounds with such arbitrary principles as are totally inconsistent with a free constitution.

As Johnson now shone in the plenitude of his political glory, from the number and celebrity of his ministerial pamphlets, an attempt was made to bring him into the house of commons by Mr. Strahan the king's printer, who was himself in parliament, and wrote to the secretary of the treasury upon the subject; but the application was not successful.

In 1773 he published a new edition of his Dictionary, with additions and corrections, and in the autumn of the same year he gratified a desire which he had long entertained, of visiting the Hebrides or western isles of Scotland. He was accompanied by Mr. Boswell; whose acuteness he afterwards observed would help his enquiry, and whose gaiety of conversation and civility of manners were sufficient to counteract the inconveniencies of travel in countries less hospitable than those they were to pass.

In the course of the years 1773 and 1774, he published a number of pamphlets in vindication of the conduct of ministry, to whom as a pensioner he had become wholly devoted. These he collected into a volume and published under the title of 'Political Tracts by the author of the Rambler, octavo.' In March he was gratified by the title of Doctor of Laws, conferred on him by the University of Oxford, at the solicitation of Lord North. In September he visited France for the first time with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and Mr. Baretti, and returned to England in about two months after he quitted it. Foote, who happened to be in Paris at the same time, said that the French were perfectly astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress; which was exactly the same with what he was accustomed to in London; his brown clothes, black stockings and plain shirt. Of the occurrences of this tour, he kept a journal, in all probability with a design of writing an

an account of it, but for want of leisure and inclination he never carried it into execution.

This year he published an account of his tour to the Hebrides, under the title of 'a Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland, octavo.' The narrative, it must be admitted, is written with an undue prejudice against both the country and people of Scotland, which is highly reprehensible, though it abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, ingenious sentiments and lively descriptions. Among many other disquisitions, he expresses his disbelief of the authenticity of the poems of Ossian presented to the public as a translation from the Erse. This excited the resentment of Mr. Macpherson, who sent a threatening letter to the author, and Johnson answered him in the rough phrase of stern defiance.

'I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me; I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian! What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture, I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute; your rage I defy, your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable, and what I hear of your morals, inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.'

The threats alluded to in this letter never were attempted to be put into execution. But Johnson, as a provision of defence, furnished himself with a large oaken plant, six feet in height, of the diameter of an inch at the lower end, increasing to three inches at the top, and terminating in a head (once the root) of the size of a large orange. This he kept in his bed-chamber, so near his chair as to be within his reach.

In 1777 the fate of Dr. Dodd excited Johnson's compassion, and called forth the strenuous exertion of his vast comprehensive mind. He thought his sentence just, yet perhaps fearing that religion might suffer from the errors of one of its ministers, he endeavoured to prevent the last ignominious spectacle, by writing several petitions, as well as observations in the newspapers in his favour. He likewise wrote a prologue to Kelly's comedy
of

of a *Word to the Wife*, which was acted at Covent Garden theatre for the benefit of the author's widow and children.

This year he engaged to write a concise account of the Lives of the English Poets; as a recompense for an undertaking as he thought not very tedious or difficult, he bargained for two hundred guineas; and was afterwards presented by the proprietors with one hundred pounds. In the selection of the poets he had no responsible concern; but Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden were inserted by his recommendation.—This was the last of Johnson's literary labours, and though completed when he was in his seventy-first year, shews that his faculties were in as vigorous a state as ever. His judgment and his taste, his quickness in the discrimination of motives, and facility of moral reflections, shine as strongly in these narratives, as in any of his more early performances; and his style if not so energetic, is at least more smoothed down to the taste of the generality of readers. The lives of the English Poets formed a memorable era in Johnson's life. It is a work which has contributed to immortalize his name, and has secured that rational esteem, which party or partiality could not procure, and which even the injudicious zeal of his friends has not been able to lessen.

From the close of this work, the malady that persecuted him through life, came upon him with redoubled force. His constitution rapidly declined, and the fabric of his mind seemed to be tottering. The contemplation of his approaching end dwelt constantly upon his mind, and the prospect of death he declared was terrible.

In 1781 he lost his valuable friend Thrale, who appointed him executor with a legacy of 200l. 'I felt,' he said, 'almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon that face, that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me, but with respect and benignity. Of his departed friend he has given a true character in a Latin epitaph to be seen in the church-yard of Streatham.

After the death of Mr. Thrale, his visits to Streatham, where he no longer looked upon himself as a welcome guest, became less and less frequent; and on the 5th of April 1783, he took his final leave of Mrs. Thrale, to whom for near twenty years he had been under the highest obligations; a friendly correspondence continued however between Johnson and Mrs. Thrale without interruption,
till

till the summer following, when she retired to Bath, and informed him that she was going to dispose of herself in marriage to Signior Piozzi, an Italian music master. Johnson endeavoured to dissuade her from the match, but without effect; for her answer to his letter on the subject, contained a vindication of her conduct and her fame, an inhibition of Johnson from following her to Bath, and a farewell, concluding, 'till you have changed your opinion of ——— let us converse no more!'

From this time the narrative of his life is little more than a recital of the pressures of melancholy and disease, and of numberless excursions taken to calm his anxiety, and sooth his apprehensions of the terrors of death, by flying as it were from himself. In the beginning of 1784, he was seized with a spasmodic asthma, which was soon accompanied with some degree of dropsy. From the latter of these complaints, however, he was greatly relieved by a course of medicine.

Having expressed a desire of going to Italy for the recovery of his health, and his friends not deeming his pension adequate to the support of the expences incidental to the journey; application was made to the minister, by Mr. Boswell and Sir Joshua Reynolds unknown to Johnson, through Lord Chancellor Thurlow, for an augmentation of it by 200*l*. The application was unsuccessful; but the Lord Chancellor offered to let him have 500*l*. out of his own purse, under the appellation of a loan, but with the intention of conferring it as a present. It is also recorded to the honour of Dr. Brocklesby that he offered to contribute 100*l*. per annum, during his residence abroad; but Johnson declined the offer with becoming gratitude; indeed he was now approaching fast to a state in which money could be of no avail.

During his illness he experienced the steady and kind attachment of his numerous friends. Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Warren, and Mr. Cruikshank generously attended him without accepting any fees; but his constitution was decayed beyond the restorative powers of the medical art. Previous to his dissolution he burnt indiscriminately large masses of paper, and amongst the rest two 4to. volumes, containing a full and most particular account of his own life, the loss of which is much to be regretted. He expired on the 13th of December, 1785, in the seventy

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He has an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes, so as to make him a sad spectacle. Mr. P; from the merit of this work, which was all the knowledge he had of him, endeavoured to serve him without his own application, and wrote to my Lord Gower, but did not succeed. Mr. Johnson published afterwards another poem in Latin, with notes, the whole very humorous, called the '*Norfolk Prophecy*.'

At the close of the year 1739, the friends of Savage commiserating his case, raised a subscription to enable that unfortunate genius to retire to Swansea; by which means Johnson was parted from his companion, and exempted from many temptations to dissipation and licentiousness, in which he indulged from his attachment to his friend, though contrary to the gravity of his own temper and disposition.

In the years 1740, 41, 42, and 43, he furnished for the '*Gentleman's Magazine*,' a variety of publications, besides the Parliamentary Debates. Among these were the lives of several eminent men; an essay on the account of the conduct of the Duke of Marlborough, then the popular topic of conversation; and an advertisement for Osborne, concerning the '*Bibliotheca Harleiana, or a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford*.'—This was afterwards prefixed to the first volume of the catalogue, in which the Latin account of books was written by him. Mr. Osborne purchased the library for 13,000*l.* a sum which Mr. Oldys says in one of his manuscripts was not more than the binding of the books had cost, yet the slowness of the sale was such, that there was not much gained by it. It has been confidently related with many embellishments, that Johnson knocked Osborne down in his shop with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. Johnson himself relates it differently to Mr. Boswell, 'Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him; but it was not in his shop, it was in my own chamber.' This anecdote has been told to prove Johnson's ferocity; but the matter has been palliated by the friends of Johnson, who imputed it to the arrogant behaviour of the bookseller.

In 1744, he produced the Life of Savage, which he had announced his intention of writing in the '*Gentleman's Magazine*' for August 1743. This work did him infinite honour; being no sooner published, than the following liberal commendation was given of it by Fielding in the '*Cham.*'

‘Champion,’ which was copied into the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ for April, and confirmed by the approbation of the public.

‘This pamphlet is, without flattery to its author, as just and well-written a piece, as any of its kind I ever saw. It is certainly penned with equal accuracy and spirit; of which I am so much the better judge, as I know many of the facts to be strictly true and very fairly related. It is a very amusing and withal a very instructive and valuable performance. The author’s observations are short, significant and just, and his narrative remarkably smooth, and well disposed. His reflections open to all the recesses of the human heart; and in a word, a more just or pleasant, a more engaging, or a more instructive treatise in all the excellencies and defects of human nature, is scarce to be found in our own, or perhaps any other language.’—

Johnson, great as his abilities confessedly were, had now lived half his days to very little purpose; he had toiled and laboured, yet as he himself expresses it, it was ‘to provide for the day that was passing over him.’ Sir John Hawkins has preserved a list of literary projects of no less than thirty-nine articles, which he had formed in the course of his studies; but such was his want of encouragement, or the versatility of his temper, that not one of all those projects was ever executed. He now formed a plan for a new edition of Shakespeare; but in this he was anticipated by Warburton, of whose competency for the undertaking the public had then a very high opinion. The preparatory pamphlet however, which Johnson had published upon the occasion, was highly commended by that supercilious churchman, who spoke of it as the work of a man of great parts and genius. Johnson ever acknowledged the obligation with gratitude, ‘He praised me,’ said he, ‘at a time when praise was of value to me.’

In 1746 he formed and digested the plan of his great philological work, which might then be well esteemed one of the desiderata of English literature: It was announced to the public in 1747, in a pamphlet entitled ‘The Plan of a Dictionary of the English language, addressed to the Right Honorable Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, one of his Majesty’s principal secretaries of state.’ The hint of undertaking this work is said to have been first suggested to Johnson by Doddsley, who contracted with him
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for the execution of it in conjunction with Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messrs. Longman and the two Messrs. Knapton. The price stipulated was 1575l. The cause of its being inscribed to Lord Chesterfield is thus related: 'I had neglected,' said Johnson, 'to write it by the time appointed. Doddsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for the delay, that it might be better done, and let Doddsley have his desire.'

To enable him to complete this vast undertaking, he hired a house, fitted up one of the upper rooms after the manner of a counting house, and employed six amanuenses there in transcribing. The words partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them; he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the several passages with a black lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced.

His fortunate pupil Garrick having in the course of this year become joint patentee and manager of Drury Lane theatre, Johnson furnished him with a prologue at the opening of it, which for just and manly criticism, as well as poetical excellence, is unrivalled in that species of composition.

In 1748, he formed a club that met at a chop-house in Ivy Lane every Tuesday evening, with a view to enjoy literary discussion, and the pleasure of animated relaxation. They used to dispute about the moral sense and the fitness of things, but Johnson was not uniform in his opinions, contending as often for victory as for truth. This inclination prevailed with him throughout life.

The year following he published 'The Vanity of Human Wishes, being the tenth Satire of Juvenal imitated,' with his name. This poem is characterized by profound reflection, more than pointed spirit. It has however been always held in high esteem. The instances of the variety of disappointments are chosen so judiciously, and painted so strongly, that the moment they are read, they bring conviction to every thinking mind.

The same year his tragedy of *Irene*, which had long been kept back for want of encouragement, appeared upon the stage

stage at Drury Lane, through the kindness of his friend Garrick. Previous to the representation a violent altercation took place between the author and the manager. Johnson, like too many authors, little acquainted with stage effect, pertinaciously rejected the advice of Garrick, and would by no means submit his lines to the critical amputation of the manager, till at length through the interference of a friend to both parties, he gave way to the proposed alterations, at least in part; and the tragedy was produced.

Before the curtain was drawn up, Johnson's friends were alarmed by the whistling of cat-calls; but the prologue, written by the author in a manly strain, soothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably well till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out—'Murder! murder!'—She several times attempted to speak, but in vain: at last she was obliged to go off the stage alive. This passage was afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, no doubt at the suggestion of Mr. Garrick, to which if the author had attended in time, his compliance might have saved his play. However it is said that he acquiesced without a murmur in the unfavourable decision of the public upon his tragedy, and it appears he was convinced that dramatic writing was not his fort, as he was never known to have made another effort in that species of composition.

On the 20th of March 1750, he published the first paper of the *Rambler*, and continued it without interruption every Tuesday and Friday till the 17th of March 1752, when it closed. In carrying on this periodical publication he seems neither to have courted, nor to have met with much assistance; the papers contributed by others amounting only to five in number. These admirable essays we are told by Mr. Boswell, were written in haste, just as they were wanted for the press, without ever being read over by him before they were printed. The *Rambler* was not successful as a periodical work, not more than five hundred copies of any one number having been ever sold. Soon after the first folio edition was concluded, it was published in four octavo volumes, and the author lived to see a just tribute of approbation paid to its merit in the extensiveness of its sale, ten numerous editions of it having been printed in London,

London, before his death, besides those in Ireland and Scotland.

Sir John Hawkins relates that in the spring of 1751, he indulged himself in a frolic of midnight revelling. This was to celebrate the birth-day of Mrs. Lennox's first literary child, the novel of 'Harriet Stuart.' He drew the members of the Ivy Lane club, and others, to the number of twenty, to the Devil tavern, where Mrs. Lennox and her husband met them. Johnson, after an invocation of the muses, and some other ceremonies of his own invention, invested the authoress with a laurel crown. The festivity was protracted till morning, and Johnson throughout the night was a Bacchanalian without the use of wine.

Though his circumstances at this time were far from being easy; he received as a constant visitor at his house, Miss Anna Williams, daughter of a Welsh physician, and a woman of more than ordinary talents and literature, who had just lost her sight. She had contracted a close intimacy with his wife, and after her death she had an apartment from him at all times when he had a house. In 1755, Garrick gave her a benefit which produced 200*l*. She afterwards published a quarto volume of miscellanies, and thereby increased her little stock to 300*l*. This, and Johnson's protection supported her during the rest of her life.

In 1752 he lost his wife, after a cohabitation of seventeen years, and in this melancholy event felt the most poignant distress. In the interval between her death and burial he composed a funeral sermon for her which was never preached, but being given to a friend, it has been published since his death. The following authentic and artless account of his situation after his wife's death was given to Mr. Boswell, by Francis Barber, his faithful negro-servant, who was brought from Jamaica by Colonel Bathurst, father of his friend Doctor Bathurst, and came into his family about a fortnight after the dismal event.

'He was in great affliction, Miss Williams was then living in his house, which was in Gough Square. He was busy with his dictionary; Mr. Shiels and some others of the gentlemen who had written for him, used to come about him. He had then little for himself, but frequently sent money to Mr. Shiels when in distress. The friends who visited him at that time were chiefly Dr. Bathurst, and Mr. Diamond an apothecary, in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, with whom

whom he and Miss Williams generally dined every Sunday. There were also Mr. Cave, Dr. Hawkesworth, Mrs. Masters, the poetess who lived with Mrs. Cave, Mr. Carter, and sometimes Mrs. Macaulay; Mr. (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds, Mr. Millar, Mr. Doddsley, Mr. Payne, Mr. Strahan, the Earl of Orrery, Lord Southwell and Mr. Garrick.' Johnson seems to have sought a remedy for the deprivation of domestic society in the loss of his wife, in the company of this circle of his acquaintance, who conceived for him the most sincere veneration and esteem.

Soon after the *Rambler* ceased, Dr. Hawkesworth projected the *Adventurer*, in conjunction with Bonnel Thornton, Dr. Bathurst, and others. The first number was published 7th November, 1752, and the paper continued twice a week till March 9th, 1754. Thornton's assistance was soon withdrawn, and he set up a new paper in conjunction with Colman called the *Connoisseur*. Johnson was zealous for the success of the *Adventurer*, which was at first rather more popular than the *Rambler*. He engaged the assistance of Dr. Warton, whose admirable essays were well known. Johnson began to write in the *Adventurer* April 10th, 1753, marking his papers with the Signature T. His price was two guineas for each paper. Of all the papers he wrote he gave both the fame and the profit to Dr. Bathurst. Indeed the latter wrote them, while Johnson dictated; tho' he considered it as a point of honour not to own them. He even used to say he did not *write* them, on the pretext that he *dictated* them only, allowing himself by this casuistry to be accessory to the propagation of falsehood, though his conscience had been hurt by even the appearance of imposition in writing the Parliamentary Debates. This year he wrote for Mrs. Lennox the 'Dedication to the Earl of Orrery,' of her *Shakespeare illustrated* in two volumes 12mo.

The death of Mr. Cave, January the 10th, 1754, afforded Johnson an opportunity of shewing his regard for his early patron by writing his life, which was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February: in the end of July he found leisure to make an excursion to Oxford for the purpose of consulting the libraries there. 'He stayed,' says Mr. Warton, 'about five weeks, but he did not collect any thing in the libraries for his dictionary.'

As the arduous work of the dictionary drew towards a conclusion, Lord Chesterfield, who had treated Johnson

with great contempt, now meanly condescended to court a reconciliation with him, in hopes of being immortalized in a dedication. With this view he wrote two essays in the "World," in praise of the dictionary, and according to Sir John Hawkins, sent Sir Thomas Robinson to him for the same purpose. But Johnson rejected the advances of the noble Lord, and spurned his profered patronage, in the following letter, which is worthy of being preserved, as it affords the noblest lesson to both patrons and authors that stands upon record in the annals of literary history.

' I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the "World," that two papers in which my dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be distinguished is an honour, which being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

' When upon some slight encouragement I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered like the rest of mankind by your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*, that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

' Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

' The Shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

' Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed
till

till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations, where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

‘Having carried on my work thus far, with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

My Lord, your's, &c. &c.

Johnson however acknowledged, to a friend, that he once received ten pounds from Lord Chesterfield; but as that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find place in a letter of the kind that this was. Lord Chesterfield read the letter to Doddsley with an air of indifference, smiled at the several passages, and observed how well they were expressed. He excused his neglect of Johnson, by saying that he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived, and declared he would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he knew that he had denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome. Of Lord Chesterfield's general affability and easiness of access, especially to literary men, the evidence is unquestionable; but of the character which he gave of Johnson in his letters to his son, and the difference in their manners, little union or friendship could be looked for between them. Certain it is however, that Johnson remained under an obligation to his lordship to the value of ten pounds.

Though he failed in an attempt, at an early period of life, to obtain the degree of Master of Arts; the university of Oxford, a short time before the publication of his dictionary, in anticipation of the excellence of the work, and at the solicitation of his friend Mr. Warton, unanimously presented it to him; and it was considered as an honour of considerable importance in the introduction of the work to the notice of the public.

At length in the month of May 1754, appeared his ‘Dictionary of the English Language, with an History of the Language, and an English Grammar, in two volumes,

folio.' It was received by the learned world, who had long wished for its appearance, with a degree of applause, proportionable to the impatience which the promise of it had excited. Though we may believe him in the declaration at the end of his preface, that he dismissed it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise; there cannot be a doubt but that he was highly gratified by the reputation it acquired both at home and abroad. The Earl of Corke and Orrery, being at Florence, presented it to the *Accademia della Crusca*. The academy sent Johnson their *Vocabulario*, and the French Academy sent him their *Dictionnaire* by Mr. Langton.

Johnson, as though he had foreseen some of the circumstances which would attend the publication of this arduous work, observes, 'A few wild blunders and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt; but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there can never be wanting some who distinguish desert.' Among those who amused themselves and the public on this occasion, Mr. Wilkes, in an essay printed in the public advertiser, ridiculed the following passage in the *Grammar*, 'H seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable.' The remark is certainly too definite; but the author never altered the passage. Dr. Kenrick threatened an attack, several years after, in his *Review of Johnson's Shakespeare*, but it was never carried into execution. *Campbell's Lexiphanes*, published in 1767, and *Callender's Deformities of Dr. Johnson*, in 1782, may have some point and tendency to risibility, but in the opinion of a scholar must be insignificant and nugatory. It would be doing injustice to the memory of his old friend and pupil Garrick, to omit the following epigram, with which he complimented our learned author on the first appearance of his dictionary. It is happily allusive to the ill success of the forty members of the French Academy employed in settling their language.

'Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance
That one English soldier will beat ten of France;
Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
Our odds are still greater, still greater our men;
In the deep mines of science, tho' Frenchmen may toil,
Can their strength be compar'd to Locke, Newton, and
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Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their powers,
 Their verse-men and prose-men, then match them with ours;
 First Shakespeare and Milton, like gods in the fight,
 Have put their whole drama and epic to flight;
 In satires, epistles, and odes would they cope,
 Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope;
 And Johnson well-armed like a hero of yore,
 Has beat *forty* French, and will beat forty more.'

Our author having spent, during the progress of his laborious work, the money for which he had contracted to execute it, was still under the necessity of exerting his talents, as he himself expresses it, in making provision for the day that was passing over him. The subscriptions taken in for his edition of Shakespeare, and the profits of his miscellaneous essays, were now his principal resource for subsistence; and it appears from the following letter to Mr. Richardson, dated Gough Square, March 16, 1756, that they were not sufficient to ward off the distress of an arrest on a particular emergency.

'I am obliged to entreat your assistance; I am now under an arrest for five pounds eighteen shillings; Mr. Strahan from whom I should have received the necessary help in this case is not at home, and I am afraid of not finding Mr. Millar. If you could be so good as to send me this sum, I will very gratefully repay you, and add it to all former obligations.' In the margin of this letter there is a memorandum in these words.—'March 16, 1756. Sent six guineas, Witness William Richardson.'

The same year he engaged to superintend, and contribute largely, to another monthly publication, entitled—'The Literary Magazine, or Universal Review.' For this periodical work, he wrote original essays, and critical reviews: his essays evince extensive reading and sound judgment: some of his reviews are short accounts of the productions noticed, but many of them are examples of elaborate criticism in the most masterly style. About this period he was offered by a particular friend, a church living of considerable value in Lincolnshire, if he would take orders and accept it; but he chose to decline the clerical function. This year the Ivy Lane club was dissolved by the dispersion of the members.

In April 1758, he began the *Idler*, which appeared statedly in a weekly newspaper, called—'The Universal Chronicle,'

nicle,' and was continued till April 1760. The *Idler* evidently appeared to be the production of the same genius as the *Rambler*; but it has more of real life as well as ease of language.

Soon after the death of his mother, which happened in the beginning of 1759, he wrote his *Rasselas*, Prince of Abyssinia, that with the profits he might defray the expence of her funeral, and pay some little debts which he had contracted. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he composed it in the evenings of one week, sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over. He received for the copy 100l.; and 25l. when it came to a second edition. The applause with which this work was received, bore ample testimony to its merit; indeed, its reception was such that it has been translated into various modern languages, and admitted into the politest libraries of Europe.

In 1760, Mr. Murphy conceiving himself illiberally treated by Dr. Franklin, a cotemporary writer in his *Dissertation on Tragedy*, published an animated vindication of himself, in a Poetical Epistle to Samuel Johnson, A. M. in which he complimented Johnson in a just and elegant manner. An acquaintance first commenced between Johnson and Mr. Murphy in the following manner. Mr. Murphy during the publication of his '*Gray's Inn Journal*,' happened to be in the country with Foote, the modern Aristophanes, and having mentioned that he was obliged to go London, to get ready for the press one of the numbers; Foote said to him—'You need not go on that account. Here is a French magazine, in which you will find a very pretty oriental tale; translate that and send it to your printer. Mr. Murphy having read the tale was highly pleased with it, and followed Foote's advice. When he arrived in town, this tale was pointed out to him in the *Rambler*, from whence it had been translated into the French magazine. Mr. Murphy then waited upon Johnson to explain this curious incident, and a friendship was formed between them that continued without interruption till the death of Johnson.

In 1762, Fortune, which had hitherto left our author to struggle with the inconveniences of a precarious subsistence, arising entirely from his own labours, gave him that independence which his literary talents certainly deserved. His present Majesty, in the month of July, granted

granted him a pension of 300l. per annum, as a recompence for the honour which the excellence of his writings had been to these kingdoms. He obtained it through the interference of the Earl of Bute, then First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, upon the suggestion of Mr. Wedderburn, now Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, at the instance of Mr. Murphy and the late Mr. Sheridan, father of the present proprietor of Drury Lane theatre, and eminent for his Lectures on Oratory, as well as Dictionary of the English Language. Johnson from this circumstance was censured by some as an apostate, and ridiculed by others for becoming a pensioner. The North Briton was furnished with arguments against the minister for rewarding a Tory and a Jacobite; and Churchill satirized his political versatility with the most poignant severity in the four following lines.

‘ How to all principles untrue,
Not fix’d to old friends, nor to new,
He damns the pension which he takes,
And loves the Stuart he forsakes.’

His acceptance of the royal bounty undoubtedly subjected him to the appellation of pensioner, to which he had annexed an ignominious definition in his dictionary. It is with great propriety remarked upon this occasion, that—‘ having received a favour from two Scotchmen, against whose country he joined in the rabble cry of indiscriminate invective; it was thus that even-handed Justice commended the poisoned chalice to his own lips, and compelled him to an awkward, though not unpleasant penance, for indulging in a splenetic prejudice equally unworthy of his head and heart.’

In 1763, Mr. Boswell, from whose account the principal circumstances in these memoirs are taken, was introduced to our author, and continued to live in great intimacy with him from that time till his death.

Churchill in his ‘ Ghost,’ availed himself of the common opinion of Johnson’s credulity, and drew a caricature of him under the name of *Pomposo*, representing him as one of the believers of the story of a ghost in Cock Lane, which in 1762 had gained very great credit in London. Johnson made no reply, for it seems that with other wise folks he sat up with the ghost. Contrary however to the common opinion of Johnson’s credulity, Mr. Boswell

well asserts that he was a principal agent in detecting the imposture; and undeceived the world by publishing an account of it in the Gentleman's Magazine for January 1762.

In February 1764, to enlarge the circle of his literary acquaintance, and afford opportunities for conversation, he founded a society which afterwards became distinguished by the title of the *Literary Club*, and Sir Joshua Reynolds was the first proposer, to which Johnson acceded, and the original members were, besides himself, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Sir John Hawkins, and Goldsmith. They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, Soho, on every Monday throughout the year.

The succeeding year, 1765, was remarkable for the commencement of his acquaintance with Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and member of parliament for Southwark. Mr. Murphy who was intimate with Mr. Thrale, having spoken very highly of Johnson's conversation, he was requested to make them acquainted. This being mentioned to Johnson, he accepted of an invitation to dinner at Mr. Thrale's, and was so much pleased with his reception both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they were so much pleased with him, that his invitations to their house became more and more frequent, till, in course of time he ranked as one of the family, and an apartment was appropriated to him both in their house at Southwark, and at their villa at Streatham. Nothing could be more fortunate for Johnson than this connection. He had at the house of his friend all the comforts and even luxuries of life, his melancholy was diverted, and his irregular habits lessened, by association with an agreeable and well ordered family, by whom he was treated with the utmost respect and even affection; and it is recorded to the honour of his worthy friend, that the patron of literature and talents, of which Johnson sought in vain for the traces in Chesterfield, he found realized in Thrale.

In the course of this year he was complimented by the University of Dublin with the degree of Doctor of Laws, as the diploma expresses it, *ob egregium scriptorum elegantiam et utilitatem*, though he does not appear to have taken the title in consequence of it. Soon after, he published his edition of 'The Plays of William Shakespeare, with the Corrections and Illustrations of various Commentators, to which

which are added Notes by Samuel Johnson,' octavo. Sir John Hawkins thinks it a meagre work, he complains of the paucity of the notes, and Johnson's unfitness for the office of a scholiast. It was treated with great illiberality by Dr. Kenrick in the first part of a 'Review' of it, which was never completed. But it must be acknowledged that what he did as a commentator has no small share of merit. He has enriched his edition with a concise account of each play, and of its characteristic excellence. In the sagacity of his emendatory criticisms, and the happiness of his interpretation of obscure passages, he surpasses every other editor of this poet. Mr. Malone confesses that Johnson's vigorous and comprehensive understanding, threw more light on this author than all his predecessor had done. His preface has been pronounced by Mr. Malone to be the finest composition in our language: and it must be admitted, whether we consider the beauty and vigour of its composition, the abundance and classical selection of its allusions, the justness of the general precepts of criticism, and its accurate estimates of the excellence or defects of its author, it is equally admirable.

In February, 1767, our author was honoured by a private conversation with the king in the library at Buckingham house, which, as pointedly expressed by one of his biographers, gratified his monarchic enthusiasm. The interview was sought by the king without the knowledge of Johnson. His majesty, among other things, asked the author of so many valuable works, if he intended to publish any more. Johnson modestly answered, that he thought he had written enough. 'And so should I too,' replied the king, 'if you had not written so well.' Johnson was highly pleased with his majesty's courtesies, and afterwards observed to a friend—'Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman, as we may suppose Louis XIV. or Charles II.

In 1770, he published a political pamphlet, entitled *The False Alarm*, intended to justify the conduct of ministry, and the majority of the House of Commons, for having virtually assumed it as an axiom, that the expulsion of a member of parliament was equivalent to an exclusion; and their having declared Colonel Lutrell to be duly elected for the county of Middlesex, notwithstanding Mr. Wilkes had a great majority of votes. This being considered as a
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gross violation of the right of election, an alarm for the constitution extended itself all over the kingdom. To prove this alarm to be false, was the purpose of Johnson's pamphlet; but his arguments failed of effect, and the House of Commons has since erased the offensive resolution from the Journals. This pamphlet has great merit in point of language, but it contains much gross misrepresentation, and much malignity, and abounds with such arbitrary principles as are totally inconsistent with a free constitution.

As Johnson now shone in the plenitude of his political glory, from the number and celebrity of his ministerial pamphlets, an attempt was made to bring him into the house of commons by Mr. Strahan the king's printer, who was himself in parliament, and wrote to the secretary of the treasury upon the subject; but the application was not successful.

In 1773 he published a new edition of his Dictionary, with additions and corrections, and in the autumn of the same year he gratified a desire which he had long entertained, of visiting the Hebrides or western isles of Scotland. He was accompanied by Mr. Boswell; whose acuteness he afterwards observed would help his enquiry, and whose gaiety of conversation and civility of manners were sufficient to counteract the inconveniencies of travel in countries less hospitable than those they were to pass.

In the course of the years 1773 and 1774, he published a number of pamphlets in vindication of the conduct of ministry, to whom as a pensioner he had become wholly devoted. These he collected into a volume and published under the title of 'Political Tracts by the author of the Rambler, octavo.' In March he was gratified by the title of Doctor of Laws, conferred on him by the University of Oxford, at the solicitation of Lord North. In September he visited France for the first time with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and Mr. Baretti, and returned to England in about two months after he quitted it. Foote, who happened to be in Paris at the same time, said that the French were perfectly astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress; which was exactly the same with what he was accustomed to in London; his brown clothes, black stockings and plain shirt. Of the occurrences of this tour, he kept a journal, in all probability with a design of writing
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an account of it, but for want of leisure and inclination he never carried it into execution.

This year he published an account of his tour to the Hebrides, under the title of 'a Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland, octavo.' The narrative, it must be admitted, is written with an undue prejudice against both the country and people of Scotland, which is highly reprehensible, though it abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, ingenious sentiments and lively descriptions. Among many other disquisitions, he expresses his disbelief of the authenticity of the poems of Ossian presented to the public as a translation from the Erse. This excited the resentment of Mr. Macpherson, who sent a threatening letter to the author, and Johnson answered him in the rough phrase of stern defiance.

'I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me; I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian! What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture, I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute; your rage I defy, your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable, and what I hear of your morals, inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.'

The threats alluded to in this letter never were attempted to be put into execution. But Johnson, as a provision of defence, furnished himself with a large oaken plant, six feet in height, of the diameter of an inch at the lower end, increasing to three inches at the top, and terminating in a head (once the root) of the size of a large orange. This he kept in his bed-chamber, so near his chair as to be within his reach.

In 1777 the fate of Dr. Dodd excited Johnson's compassion, and called forth the strenuous exertion of his vast comprehensive mind. He thought his sentence just, yet perhaps fearing that religion might suffer from the errors of one of its ministers, he endeavoured to prevent the last ignominious spectacle, by writing several petitions, as well as observations in the newspapers in his favour. He likewise wrote a prologue to Kelly's comedy
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of a *Word to the Wise*, which was acted at Covent Garden theatre for the benefit of the author's widow and children.

This year he engaged to write a concise account of the Lives of the English Poets; as a recompense for an undertaking as he thought not very tedious or difficult, he bargained for two hundred guineas; and was afterwards presented by the proprietors with one hundred pounds. In the selection of the poets he had no responsible concern; but Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden were inserted by his recommendation.—This was the last of Johnson's literary labours, and though completed when he was in his seventy-first year, shews that his faculties were in as vigorous a state as ever. His judgment and his taste, his quickness in the discrimination of motives, and facility of moral reflections, shine as strongly in these narratives, as in any of his more early performances; and his style if not so energetic, is at least more smoothed down to the taste of the generality of readers. The lives of the English Poets formed a memorable era in Johnson's life. It is a work which has contributed to immortalize his name, and has secured that rational esteem, which party or partiality could not procure, and which even the injudicious zeal of his friends has not been able to lessen.

From the close of this work, the malady that persecuted him through life, came upon him with redoubled force. His constitution rapidly declined, and the fabric of his mind seemed to be tottering. The contemplation of his approaching end dwelt constantly upon his mind, and the prospect of death he declared was terrible.

In 1781 he lost his valuable friend Thrale, who appointed him executor with a legacy of 200l. 'I felt,' he said, 'almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon that face, that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me, but with respect and benignity. 'Of his departed friend he has given a true character in a Latin epitaph to be seen in the church-yard of Streatham.

After the death of Mr. Thrale, his visits to Streatham, where he no longer looked upon himself as a welcome guest, became less and less frequent; and on the 5th of April 1783, he took his final leave of Mrs. Thrale, to whom for near twenty years he had been under the highest obligations; a friendly correspondence continued however between Johnson and Mrs. Thrale without interruption, till

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till the summer following, when she retired to Bath, and informed him that she was going to dispose of herself in marriage to Signior Piozzi, an Italian music master. Johnson endeavoured to dissuade her from the match, but without effect; for her answer to his letter on the subject, contained a vindication of her conduct and her fame, an inhibition of Johnson from following her to Bath, and a farewell, concluding, 'till you have changed your opinion of ——— let us converse no more!'

From this time the narrative of his life is little more than a recital of the pressures of melancholy and disease, and of numberless excursions taken to calm his anxiety, and sooth his apprehensions of the terrors of death, by flying as it were from himself. In the beginning of 1784, he was seized with a spasmodic asthma, which was soon accompanied with some degree of dropsy. From the latter of these complaints, however, he was greatly relieved by a course of medicine.

Having expressed a desire of going to Italy for the recovery of his health, and his friends not deeming his pension adequate to the support of the expences incidental to the journey; application was made to the minister, by Mr. Boswell and Sir Joshua Reynolds unknown to Johnson, through Lord Chancellor Thurlow, for an augmentation of it by 200l. The application was unsuccessful; but the Lord Chancellor offered to let him have 500l. out of his own purse, under the appellation of a loan, but with the intention of conferring it as a present. It is also recorded to the honour of Dr. Brocklesby that he offered to contribute 100l. per annum, during his residence abroad; but Johnson declined the offer with becoming gratitude; indeed he was now approaching fast to a state in which money could be of no avail.

During his illness he experienced the steady and kind attachment of his numerous friends. Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Warren, and Mr. Cruikshank generously attended him without accepting any fees; but his constitution was decayed beyond the restorative powers of the medical art. Previous to his dissolution he burnt indiscriminately large masses of paper, and amongst the rest two 4to. volumes, containing a full and most particular account of his own life, the loss of which is much to be regretted. He expired on the 13th of December, 1785, in the seventy
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fifth year of his age, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and close to the coffin of his friend Garrick. Agreeable to his own request, a large blue flag-stone was placed over his grave, with this inscription.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L. L. D.

OBIIT XIII. DIE DECEMERIS,

ANNO DOMINI

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ÆTATIS SUÆ LXXV.

A monument for Johnson in the cathedral church of St. Paul, in conjunction with the benevolent Howard was resolved upon with the approbation of the dean and chapter, and supported by a most respectable contribution. It was opened in 1795.

Having no near relations, he left the bulk of his property, amounting to 1500*l.* to his faithful servant Francis Barber, whom he looked upon as particularly under his protection, and whom he had long treated as an humble friend. He appointed Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. (Sir William) Scott his executors. His death attracted the public attention in an uncommon degree, and was followed by an unprecedented accumulation of literary honours, in the various forms of sermons, elegies, memoirs, lives, essays and anecdotes.

The religious, moral, political and literary character of Johnson, will be better understood by the account of his life, than by any laboured and critical comments. Yet it may not be superfluous here to attempt to collect from his several biographers, into one view his most prominent excellencies and distinguishing particularities.

Johnson's figure was large, robust, and unwieldy, from corpulency. His appearance was rendered strange and somewhat uncouth by sudden emotions, which appeared to a common observer to be involuntary and convulsive. But in the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds, they were the consequence of a depraved habit of accompanying his thoughts with certain untoward actions, which seemed as if they were meant to reprobate some part of his past conduct. He had the use only of one eye; yet so much does the mind govern, and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his visual perceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament,

raiment, that he never enjoyed the free and vigorous use of his limbs; and when he walked, it was like the straggling gait of one in fetters; and when he rode he had no command nor direction of his horse. That with such a constitution and habits of life, he should have lived seventy-five years, is, as Mr. Boswell remarks, a proof that an inherent *vivida vis* is a powerful preservative of the human frame. In his dress he was singular and slovenly, and though he improved in some degree under the lectures of Mrs. Thrale, during his long residence in the family, yet he never could be said to have completely surmounted particularity.

He was fond of good company and good living, and to the last, he knew of no method of regulating his appetite, but absolute restraint, or unlimited indulgence. ‘Many a day,’ says Mr. Boswell, ‘did he fast, many a year refrain from wine; but when he did eat, it was voraciously, when he did drink, it was copiously. He could practise abstinence, but not temperance. In conversation it was generally admitted, that he was rude, intemperate, overbearing, and impatient of contradiction. Addicted to argument, and ambitious of victory, he was equally regardless of truth and fair reasoning in his approaches to conquest. ‘There is no arguing with him,’ said Goldsmith, alluding to a speech in one of Cibber’s plays; ‘for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the but end of it.’

He had accustomed himself to such accuracy in common conversation, that he at all times delivered himself with a force, choice, and elegance of expression; the effect of which was aided by his having a loud voice, and a slow and deliberate utterance. Though usually grave in his deportment, he possessed much wit and humour, and often indulged in colloquial pleasantry. Mrs. Piozzi says, that ‘if poetry was talked of, his quotations were the readiest, and had he not been eminent for more solid and brilliant qualities, mankind would have united to extol his extraordinary memory. His manner of repeating deserves to be described, though at the same time it defeats all power of description; but whoever once heard him repeat an ode of Horace, would be long before they could endure to hear it repeated by another.’

Mr. Boswell very judiciously observes, that in proportion to the native vigour of the mind, the contradictory qualities will be the more prominent, and more difficult

to be adjusted, and therefore we are not to wonder that Johnson exhibited an eminent example of this remark upon human nature. Though the vigour of his mind was almost beyond parallel; yet from early prejudices, which all his learning and philosophy could never overcome, he was a zealous high-churchman; in his political sentiments a rank Tory, and till his present Majesty's accession to the throne, a violent jacobite. His attachment to the University of Oxford, to which in his youth he owed no great obligations, led him unjustly to depreciate the merit of every person who had studied at that of Cambridge. His aversion to whigs, dissenters and presbyterians was unconquerable, and his religious bigotry was such, that when at Edinburgh, as Dr. Towers mentions, in his essay on his life, &c. he would not go to hear Dr. Robertson preach, because he would not be present at a presbyterian assembly; though he with the learned world in general admitted that that eminent historiographer was a great ornament to literature, and thereby entitled to universal respect. He was so prone to superstition that he took off his hat in token of reverence, when he approached the places on which popish churches had formerly stood, and bowed before the monastic vestiges; nay further, he went so far as to express a serious concern, because he had put milk into his tea on a Good Friday. He was solicitous to give authenticity to stories of apparitions, and easy to credit the existence of a second sight, while he appeared scrupulous and sceptical as to particular facts.

These mental distempers are justly attributed to his melancholic temperament, and were fostered by solitary contemplation, till they had laid fetters upon the imagination too strong for reason to burst through. To this cause we must attribute his mentioning secret transgressions, his constant fear of death, and his religious terrors, not very consistent with his strength of mind, or his conviction of the goodness of God. This at least seems to have been his own opinion of the progress of these diseases, as appears from his history of the Mad Astronomer in *Rasselas*, the description of whose mind he seems to have intended as a representation of his own.

But with all these defects, from a review of his life, it appears beyond a doubt that he possessed many virtues, having been remarkably humane, charitable, affectionate
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and generous. To the warm and active benevolence of his heart, all his friends have borne testimony. 'He had nothing,' says Goldsmith, 'of the bear but his skin.' Misfortune had only to form her claim, in order to found her right to the use of his purse, or the exercise of his talents. His house was an asylum for the unhappy, beyond what a regard to personal convenience would have allowed, and his income was distributed in the support of his inmates, to an extent greater than general prudence would have permitted. Mrs. Piozzi in her anecdotes, remarks; that 'as his purse was ever open to alms-giving, so was his heart tender to those who wanted relief, and his soul susceptible of gratitude, and every kind impression.'

As a literary character Johnson has eminently distinguished himself as a philologist, a biographer, a critic, a moralist, a novelist, a political writer, and a poet.

As a philologist we need only to refer to his Dictionary in the English language, as its utility is universally acknowledged, and its popularity its best eulogium. The etymologies however, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not in every instance entitled to unqualified praise. The definitions exhibit astonishing proofs of acuteness of intellect and precision of language. His introducing his own opinions and even prejudices, under general definitions of words; as Tory, Whig, Pension, Excise, &c. must be placed to the account of capricious and humorous indulgence.

Mr. Murphy, who has given a fair and candid estimate of the literary character of Johnson, remarks that, 'the Dictionary, though in some instances abuse has been loud, and in others malice has endeavoured to undermine its fame, still remains the *Mount Atlas* of English literature.

' Though storms and tempests thunder on its brow,
And oceans break their billows at its feet;
It stands unmoved, and glories in its height.'

As a biographer, his merit is certainly great. His narrative is in general vigorous, connected and perspicuous, and his reflections numerous, apposite and moral. But it must be owned that he neither dwells with pleasure nor success, upon those minuter anecdotes of his life, which oftner shew the genuine man, than actions of greater importance. Sometimes also his colouring receives a tinge from

from prejudice, and his judgment is insensibly warped by the particularity of his private opinion.

His character as a poetical biographer has been given by his townsman, Dr. Newton, in his posthumous works, if not with his power, with his decision and severity of censure.

‘ Dr. Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets* afford much amusement, but candour was hurt and offended at the malevolence that preponderated in every part. Never was any biographer more sparing of his praises, or more abundant in his censures. He delights more in exposing blemishes, than in recommending beauties; slightly passes over excellencies, enlarges upon imperfections; and not content with his own severe reflections, revives old scandal, and produces large quotations from the long forgotten works of former critics.’

As a critic, he is entitled to the praise of being the greatest that our nation has produced. This praise he has merited by his preface to Shakespeare, and the detached pieces of criticism which appear among his works; but his critical powers shine with more concentrated radiance in the *Lives of the Poets*. Of many passages in these compositions it is not hyperbolical to affirm, that they are executed with all the skill and penetration of Aristotle, and animated and embellished with all the fire of Longinus. ‘ The *Paradise Lost*,’ is a poem which the mind of Milton only could have produced; the criticism upon it is such, as perhaps, the pen of Johnson only could have written. His estimate of Dryden and Pope challenges Quintilian’s remarks upon Demosthenes and Cicero, and rivals the finest specimens of elegant composition and critical acuteness in the English language.—But though Johnson is entitled to this high eulogium, yet in many instances it is evident, that an affectation of singularity, or some other principle, not immediately visible, frequently betrays him into a dogmatical spirit of contradiction to received opinion. Of this there needs no further proof than his almost uniform attempt to depreciate the writers of blank verse, and his degrading estimate of the admirable compositions of Prior, Hammond, Collins, Gray, Shenstone, and Akenfide. In his judgment of these poets, he may be justly accused of being warped by prejudice, resolutely blind to merit.

Miss Seward, the poetess of Litchfield, who has delineated his literary character, observes that ‘ when his attention

tion was called to modern writings, particularly if they were celebrated, and not written by any of his 'little Senate,' he generally listened with angry impatience; 'No Sir, I shall not read the book,' was his common reply. He turned from the compositions of rising genius with visible horror, which too plainly proved that envy was the bosom serpent of this literary despot, whose life had been unpolluted by licentious crimes, and who had some great and noble qualities, accompanying a stupendous reach of understanding.'

As a *moralist* his periodical papers are distinguished from those of other writers, who derived celebrity from similar publications. He has neither the wit nor the graceful ease of Addison, nor has he the humour and classic suavity of Goldsmith. His powers are of a more grave, energetic and dignified kind than any of his competitors, and if he entertains us less, he instructs us more. He shews himself master of all the recesses of the human mind, able to detect vice when disguised in its most specious form, and equally possessed of a corrosive to eradicate, or a lenitive to assuage the follies and sorrows of the heart. But his genius was only formed to chastise graver faults, which require to be touched with an heavier hand. His *Rambler* furnishes such an assemblage of discourses on practical religion and moral duty, of critical investigation, and allegorical and oriental tales, that no mind can be thought very deficient, that has by constant study and meditation assimilated to itself all that may be found there. Every page of the *Rambler* shews a mind teeming with classical illusion and poetical imagery, illustrations from other writers are upon all occasions so ready, and mingle so easily in his periods, that the whole appears of one uniform vivid texture.

Mrs. Piozzi in her *Anecdotes*, speaking of this production, has these words; 'that piety which dictated the *Rambler*, will be for ever remembered, for ever I think revered. That ample repository of religious truth, moral wisdom, and accurate criticism, breathes indeed the genuine emanations of its great author's mind, expressed too in a style so natural to him, and so much like his common mode of conversing, that I was myself but little astonished when he told me that he had scarcely read over one of those inimitable essays before they went to the press.'

Mr. Murphy observes, that 'the *Rambler* may be considered

dered as Johnson's great work. It was the basis of that high reputation which went on increasing to the end of his days. In this collection, Johnson is the great moral teacher of his countrymen; his essays form a body of ethics; the observations on life and manners are acute and instructive; and the papers professedly critical, serve to promote the cause of literature. It must however be acknowledged, that a settled gloom hangs over the author's mind, and all the essays, except eight or ten, coming from the same fountain head, no wonder that they have the raciness of the soil from which they sprung. Of this uniformity Johnson was sensible; he used to say, that if he had joined a friend or two, who would have been able to intermix papers of a sprightly turn, the collection would have been more miscellaneous, and by consequence, more agreeable to the generality of readers.

The serious papers in his *Idler*, though inferior to those in the *Rambler* in sublimity and splendour, are distinguished by the same dignified morality and solemn philosophy, and lead to the same great end of diffusing wisdom, virtue and happiness. The humorous papers are light and lively, and more in the manner of Addison.

Of the *Idler* Mr. Murphy observes, that 'in order to be consistent with the assumed character, it is written with abated vigour, in a style of ease and unlaboured elegance. It is the *Odyssey* after the *Iliad*. Intense thinking would not become the *Idler*. The first number presents a well drawn portrait of an idler, and from that character no deviation could be made. Accordingly Johnson forgets his austere manner, and plays us into sense. He still continues his lectures on human life; but he adverts to common occurrence, and is often content with the topic of the day.'

As a *novelist*, he displays in the oriental tales in the *Rambler*, an unbounded knowledge of men and manners; but his capital work in this department of literature is his *Rasselas*. None of his writings have been so extensively diffused over Europe. The language enchants us with harmony, the arguments are acute and ingenious, and the reflection novel, yet just. It astonishes by the sublimity of its sentiments, and the fertility of its illustrations, and delights by the abundance and propriety of its images. The fund of thinking which it contains, is such that almost every sentence of it may furnish a subject of long meditation;

tion; but it is not without its faults, being barren of interesting incidents and destitute of originality or distinction of characters. There is little difference in the manner of thinking and reasoning of the philosopher and the female, of the prince and the waiting woman.

Mr. Murphy comments on this novel in the following manner. 'Rasselas is undoubtedly both elegant and sublime. It is a view of human life displayed, it must be owned, in gloomy colours. The author's natural melancholy, depressed at the time by the approaching dissolution of his mother, darkened the picture. He who reads the heads of the chapters, will find that it is not a course of adventures that invites him forwards, but a discussion of interesting questions; Reflections on Human Life; the History of Imlac; the Man of Learning; a Dissertation on Poetry; the Character of a Wise and Happy Man, &c. It is by pictures of life and profound moral reflection that expectation is engaged and gratified throughout the work.' Mr. Murphy concludes his observations with these words. 'It is remarkable, that the vanity of human pursuits was, about the same time, the subject that employed both Johnson and Voltaire; but *Candide* is the work of a lively imagination, and *Rasselas* with all its splendour of eloquence, exhibits a gloomy picture.

The effect of *Rasselas*, and of Johnson's other moral tales, is thus beautifully illustrated by Mr. Courtenay in his 'Poetical Review.'

'Impressive truth, in splendid fiction drest,
Checks the vain wish, and calms the troubled breast;
O'er the dark mind a light celestial throws,
And sooths the angry passions to repose,
As oil effus'd illumines and smooths the deep,
When round the bark the swelling surges sweep.

As a political writer, his productions are more distinguished by subtlety of disquisition, poignancy of satire and energy of style, than by truth, equity or candour. In perusing his representation of those who differed from him in political subjects, we are sometimes inclined to assert to a proposition of his own, that 'there is no credit due to a rhetorician's account, either of good or evil.' Many positions are laid down in admirable language, and in highly polished periods, which are inconsistent with the principles of the British constitution, and repugnant to the common rights

of a *Word to the Wife*, which was acted at Covent Garden theatre for the benefit of the author's widow and children.

This year he engaged to write a concise account of the Lives of the English Poets; as a recompense for an undertaking as he thought not very tedious or difficult, he bargained for two hundred guineas; and was afterwards presented by the proprietors with one hundred pounds. In the selection of the poets he had no responsible concern; but Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden were inserted by his recommendation.—This was the last of Johnson's literary labours, and though completed when he was in his seventy-first year, shews that his faculties were in as vigorous a state as ever. His judgment and his taste, his quickness in the discrimination of motives, and facility of moral reflections, shine as strongly in these narratives, as in any of his more early performances; and his style if not so energetic, is at least more smoothed down to the taste of the generality of readers. The lives of the English Poets formed a memorable era in Johnson's life. It is a work which has contributed to immortalize his name, and has secured that rational esteem, which party or partiality could not procure, and which even the injudicious zeal of his friends has not been able to lessen.

From the close of this work, the malady that persecuted him through life, came upon him with redoubled force. His constitution rapidly declined, and the fabric of his mind seemed to be tottering. The contemplation of his approaching end dwelt constantly upon his mind, and the prospect of death he declared was terrible.

In 1781 he lost his valuable friend Thrale, who appointed him executor with a legacy of 200l. 'I felt,' he said, 'almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon that face, that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me, but with respect and benignity. Of his departed friend he has given a true character in a Latin epitaph to be seen in the church-yard of Streatham.

After the death of Mr. Thrale, his visits to Streatham, where he no longer looked upon himself as a welcome guest, became less and less frequent; and on the 5th of April 1783, he took his final leave of Mrs. Thrale, to whom for near twenty years he had been under the highest obligations; a friendly correspondence continued however between Johnson and Mrs. Thrale without interruption,
till

till the summer following, when she retired to Bath, and informed him that she was going to dispose of herself in marriage to Signior Piozzi, an Italian music master. Johnson endeavoured to dissuade her from the match, but without effect; for her answer to his letter on the subject, contained a vindication of her conduct and her fame, an inhibition of Johnson from following her to Bath, and a farewell, concluding, 'till you have changed your opinion of ——— let us converse no more!'

From this time the narrative of his life is little more than a recital of the pressures of melancholy and disease, and of numberless excursions taken to calm his anxiety, and sooth his apprehensions of the terrors of death, by flying as it were from himself. In the beginning of 1784, he was seized with a spasmodic asthma, which was soon accompanied with some degree of dropsy. From the latter of these complaints, however, he was greatly relieved by a course of medicine.

Having expressed a desire of going to Italy for the recovery of his health, and his friends not deeming his pension adequate to the support of the expences incidental to the journey; application was made to the minister, by Mr. Boswell and Sir Joshua Reynolds unknown to Johnson, through Lord Chancellor Thurlow, for an augmentation of it by 200l. The application was unsuccessful; but the Lord Chancellor offered to let him have 500l. out of his own purse, under the appellation of a loan, but with the intention of conferring it as a present. It is also recorded to the honour of Dr. Brocklesby that he offered to contribute 100l. per annum, during his residence abroad; but Johnson declined the offer with becoming gratitude; indeed he was now approaching fast to a state in which money could be of no avail.

During his illness he experienced the steady and kind attachment of his numerous friends. Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Warren, and Mr. Cruikshank generously attended him without accepting any fees; but his constitution was decayed beyond the restorative powers of the medical art. Previous to his dissolution he burnt indiscriminately large masses of paper, and amongst the rest two 4to. volumes, containing a full and most particular account of his own life, the loss of which is much to be regretted. He expired on the 13th of December, 1785, in the seventy

fifth year of his age, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and close to the coffin of his friend Garrick. Agreeable to his own request, a large blue flag-stone was placed over his grave, with this inscription.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L. L. D.

OBIIT XIII. DIE DECEMBERIS,

ANNO DOMINI

M, DCC, LXXXV.

ÆTATIS SUÆ LXXV.

A monument for Johnson in the cathedral church of St. Paul, in conjunction with the benevolent Howard was resolved upon with the approbation of the dean and chapter, and supported by a most respectable contribution. It was opened in 1795.

Having no near relations, he left the bulk of his property, amounting to 1500l. to his faithful servant Francis Barber, whom he looked upon as particularly under his protection, and whom he had long treated as an humble friend. He appointed Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. (Sir William) Scott his executors. His death attracted the public attention in an uncommon degree, and was followed by an unprecedented accumulation of literary honours, in the various forms of sermons, elegies, memoirs, lives, essays and anecdotes.

The religious, moral, political and literary character of Johnson, will be better understood by the account of his life, than by any laboured and critical comments. Yet it may not be superfluous here to attempt to collect from his several biographers, into one view his most prominent excellencies and distinguishing particularities.

Johnson's figure was large, robust, and unwieldy, from corpulency. His appearance was rendered strange and somewhat uncouth by sudden emotions, which appeared to a common observer to be involuntary and convulsive. But in the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds, they were the consequence of a depraved habit of accompanying his thoughts with certain untoward actions, which seemed as if they were meant to reprobate some part of his past conduct. He had the use only of one eye; yet so much does the mind govern, and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his visual perceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament,

raiment, that he never enjoyed the free and vigorous use of his limbs; and when he walked, it was like the straggling gait of one in fetters; and when he rode he had no command nor direction of his horse. That with such a constitution and habits of life, he should have lived seventy-five years, is, as Mr. Boswell remarks, a proof that an inherent *vivida vis* is a powerful preservative of the human frame. In his dress he was singular and slovenly, and though he improved in some degree under the lectures of Mrs. Thrale, during his long residence in the family, yet he never could be said to have completely surmounted particularity.

He was fond of good company and good living, and to the last, he knew of no method of regulating his appetite, but absolute restraint, or unlimited indulgence. ‘Many a day,’ says Mr. Boswell, ‘did he fast, many a year refrain from wine; but when he did eat, it was voraciously, when he did drink, it was copiously. He could practise abstinence, but not temperance. In conversation it was generally admitted, that he was rude, intemperate, overbearing, and impatient of contradiction. Addicted to argument, and ambitious of victory, he was equally regardless of truth and fair reasoning in his approaches to conquest. ‘There is no arguing with him,’ said Goldsmith, alluding to a speech in one of Cibber’s plays; ‘for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the but end of it.’

He had accustomed himself to such accuracy in common conversation, that he at all times delivered himself with a force, choice, and elegance of expression; the effect of which was aided by his having a loud voice, and a slow and deliberate utterance. Though usually grave in his deportment, he possessed much wit and humour, and often indulged in colloquial pleasantry. Mrs. Piozzi says, that ‘if poetry was talked of, his quotations were the readiest, and had he not been eminent for more solid and brilliant qualities, mankind would have united to extol his extraordinary memory. His manner of repeating deserves to be described, though at the same time it defeats all power of description; but whoever once heard him repeat an ode of Horace, would be long before they could endure to hear it repeated by another.’

Mr. Boswell very judiciously observes, that in proportion to the native vigour of the mind, the contradictory qualities will be the more prominent, and more difficult

to be adjusted, and therefore we are not to wonder that Johnson exhibited an eminent example of this remark upon human nature. Though the vigour of his mind was almost beyond parallel; yet from early prejudices, which all his learning and philosophy could never overcome, he was a zealous high-churchman; in his political sentiments a rank Tory, and till his present Majesty's accession to the throne, a violent jacobite. His attachment to the University of Oxford, to which in his youth he owed no great obligations, led him unjustly to depreciate the merit of every person who had studied at that of Cambridge. His aversion to whigs, dissenters and presbyterians was unconquerable, and his religious bigotry was such, that when at Edinburgh, as Dr. Towers mentions, in his essay on his life, &c. he would not go to hear Dr. Robertson preach, because he would not be present at a presbyterian assembly; though he with the learned world in general admitted that that eminent historiographer was a great ornament to literature, and thereby entitled to universal respect. He was so prone to superstition that he took off his hat in token of reverence, when he approached the places on which popish churches had formerly stood, and bowed before the monastic vestiges; nay further, he went so far as to express a serious concern, because he had put milk into his tea on a Good Friday. He was solicitous to give authenticity to stories of apparitions, and easy to credit the existence of a second sight, while he appeared scrupulous and sceptical as to particular facts.

These mental distempers are justly attributed to his melancholic temperament, and were fostered by solitary contemplation, till they had laid fetters upon the imagination too strong for reason to burst through. To this cause we must attribute his mentioning secret transgressions, his constant fear of death, and his religious terrors, not very consistent with his strength of mind, or his conviction of the goodness of God. This at least seems to have been his own opinion of the progress of these diseases, as appears from his history of the Mad Astronomer in *Rasselas*, the description of whose mind he seems to have intended as a representation of his own.

But with all these defects, from a review of his life, it appears beyond a doubt that he possessed many virtues, having been remarkably humane, charitable, affectionate
and

and generous. To the warm and active benevolence of his heart, all his friends have borne testimony. 'He had nothing,' says Goldsmith, 'of the bear but his skin.' Misfortune had only to form her claim, in order to found her right to the use of his purse, or the exercise of his talents. His house was an asylum for the unhappy, beyond what a regard to personal convenience would have allowed, and his income was distributed in the support of his inmates, to an extent greater than general prudence would have permitted. Mrs. Piozzi in her anecdotes, remarks; that 'as his purse was ever open to alms-giving, so was his heart tender to those who wanted relief, and his soul susceptible of gratitude, and every kind impression.'

As a literary character Johnson has eminently distinguished himself as a philologist, a biographer, a critic, a moralist, a novelist, a political writer, and a poet.

As a philologist we need only to refer to his Dictionary in the English language, as its utility is universally acknowledged, and its popularity its best eulogium. The etymologies however, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not in every instance entitled to unqualified praise. The definitions exhibit astonishing proofs of acuteness of intellect and precision of language. His introducing his own opinions and even prejudices, under general definitions of words; as Tory, Whig, Pension, Excise, &c. must be placed to the account of capricious and humorous indulgence.

Mr. Murphy, who has given a fair and candid estimate of the literary character of Johnson, remarks that, 'the Dictionary, though in some instances abuse has been loud, and in others malice has endeavoured to undermine its fame, still remains the *Mount Atlas* of English literature.

' Though storms and tempests thunder on its brow,
And oceans break their billows at its feet;
It stands unmoved, and glories in its height.'

As a biographer, his merit is certainly great. His narrative is in general vigorous, connected and perspicuous, and his reflections numerous, apposite and moral. But it must be owned that he neither dwells with pleasure nor success, upon those minuter anecdotes of his life, which oftner shew the genuine man, than actions of greater importance. Sometimes also his colouring receives a tinge

from prejudice, and his judgment is insensibly warped by the particularity of his private opinion.

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rights of mankind. In apology for him, it may be admitted, that he was attached to Tory principles, and that most of what he wrote on political subjects was conformable to his real sentiments. Mr. Murphy observes that 'Johnson's political pamphlets, whatever was his motive for writing them, whether gratitude for his pension, or the solicitation of men in power, did not support the cause for which they were undertaken. They are written in a style truly harmonious, and with his usual dignity of language. When it is said that he advanced positions repugnant to the common rights of mankind, the virulence of party may be suspected. It is perhaps true, that in the clamour raised throughout the kingdom, Johnson overheated his mind; but he was a friend to the rights of man, and he was greatly superior to the littleness of spirit that might induce him to advance what he did not think and firmly believe.'

The style of Johnson's prosaic writings has been censured, applauded, and imitated to extremes equally dangerous to the purity of the English language. He has no doubt innovated upon our language by his adoption of Latin derivatives; but the danger from his innovation would be trifling, if those alone would copy him who can think with equal precision; for few passages can be pointed out from his works, in which his meaning could be accurately expressed by such words as are in more familiar use. His comprehension of mind was the mould for his language. Had his comprehension been narrower, his expression would have been easier. And it is to be remembered that while he has added harmony and dignity to our language, he has neither violated it by the insertion of foreign idioms, nor the affectation of anomaly in the construction of his sentences; upon the whole it is certain that his example has given a general elevation to the language of his country, for some of our best writers have approached very near to him. This circumstance is well described by Mr. Courtenay in his 'Political Review,' in the following lines.

'By nature's gifts ordain'd mankind to rule,
He has like Titian form'd his brilliant school,
And taught congenial spirits to excel,
While from his lips impressive wisdom fell.'

As a poet, the merit of Johnson, though considerable, yet falls short of that which he has displayed in those provinces

vinces of literature in which we have already surveyed him. Ratiocination prevailed in Johnson more than sensibility. He has no daring sublimities nor gentle graces, he never glows with the fire of enthusiasm, or kindles a sympathetic emotion in the bosoms of his readers. His poems are the plain and sensible effusions of a mind never hurried beyond itself, to which the use of rhyme adds no beauty, and from which the use of prose would detract no force. His versification is smooth, flowing, and unrestrained, but his pauses are not sufficiently varied to rescue him from the imputation of monotony. He seems never at a loss for rhyme, or destitute of a proper expression; and the manner of his verse appears admirably adapted to didactic or satiric poetry, for which his powers were equally and perhaps alone qualified.

Mr. Murphy, in his estimate of the literary character of Johnson, observes that his English poetry is such as leaves room to think if he devoted himself to the muses, that he would have been the rival of Pope. His first production of this kind was *London*, a poem in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal. The vices of the metropolis are placed in the room of ancient manners. The author has heated his mind with the ardour of Juvenal, and having the skill to polish his numbers, he became a sharp accuser of the times. The *Vanity of Human Wishes*, is an imitation of the tenth satire of the same author. Though it is translated by Dryden, Johnson's imitation approaches nearest to the original.

It is generally admitted, that of Johnson's poetical compositions, the imitations of Juvenal are the best; they are perhaps the noblest imitations to be found in any language. It has been remarked with nice discrimination, that if Johnson's imitations of Juvenal are not so close as those done by Pope from Horace; they are infinitely more spirited and energetic. In Pope the most peculiar images of Roman Life are adapted with singular address to our own times. In Johnson, the similitude is only in general passages, suitable to every age, in which refinement has degenerated into depravity.

For the characters which Juvenal has chosen to illustrate his doctrine, Johnson has substituted others from modern history; for *Sejanus* he gives *Cardinal Wolfey*, and *Buckingham*, stabbed by Felton, for *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, *Lidiat*,
Galileo

Galileo and *Laud*; for *Hannibal*, *Charles XII.* of Sweden, and to shew the consequences of long life, he says,

‘ From Marlborough’s eyes the streams of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveller and a shew.’

He has preserved all the beauties of the original moral of the Roman poet, but stripped it with infinite art, from all appearance of Epicurian infidelity, and filled it with precepts worthy of a philosopher, and wishes becoming a Christian.

The diction of his tragedy of *Irene* is nervous, rich, and elegant; but splendid language and melodious numbers will make a fine poem, not a tragedy. There is not throughout the play, a single situation to excite curiosity, or raise a conflict of the passions. The sentiments are just and always moral, but seldom appropriated to the character, and generally too philosophic. *Irene* may be added to some other plays in our language, which have lost their place in the theatre, but continue to please in the closet. Mr. Murphy very pertinently observes that what Johnson has said of the tragedy of *Cato* may be applied to *Irene*. ‘ It is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama; rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections. Nothing excites or alluages emotion. The events are expected without solicitude, and remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care, we consider not what they are doing, nor what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. It is unaffecting and chill philosophy.’ The prologue Mr. Murphy says is written with elegance, and in a peculiar strain shews the literary pride and lofty spirit of the author.

The faults and foibles of Johnson, whatever they were, are now descended with him to the grave, but his virtues should be the object of our imitation. His works, with all their defects, are a most valuable and important accession to the literature of England. His political writings will probably be little read on any other account than for the dignity and energy of his style; but his *Dictionary*, his moral essays, and his productions in polite literature, will convey useful instruction, and elegant entertainment, as long as the language in which they are written shall be understood, and give him a just claim to a distinguished rank among the best and ablest writers that England has produced.

LONDON : A POEM.

IN IMITATION OF THE THIRD SATIRE, OF JUVENAL, 1738.

“ ————— *Quis ineptæ*
 “ *Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus ut teneat se?*”
 JUV.

THOUGH grief and fondness in my breast rebel
 When injur'd Thales bids the town farewell,
 Yet still my calmer thoughts his choice commend,
 I praise the hermit, but regret the friend ;
 Resolv'd, at length, from vice and London far, 5
 To breathe in distant fields a purer air ;
 And, fix'd on Cambria's solitary shore,
 Give to St. David one true Briton more.
 For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land,
 Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand ? 10
 There none are swept by sudden fate away,
 But all whom hunger spares, with age decay :
 Here malice, rapine, accident, conspire,
 And now a rabble rages, now a fire ;
 Their ambush here relentless ruffians lay, 15
 And here the fell attorney prowls for prey ;
 Here falling houses thunder on your head,
 And here a female atheist talks you dead.
 While Thales waits the wherry that contains
 Of dissipated wealth the small remains, 20
 On Thames's bank in silent thought we stood,
 Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood ;
 Struck with the seat that gave Eliza birth,
 We kneel and kiss the consecrated earth ;
 In pleasing dreams the blissful age renew, 25
 And call Britannia's glories back to view ;
 Behold her cross triumphant on the main,
 The guard of commerce, and the dread of Spain ;
 Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd,
 Or English honour grew a standing jest. 30

A transient calm the happy scenes bestow,
 And for a moment lull the sense of woe.
 At length awaking, with contemptuous frown,
 Indignant Thales eyes the neighbouring town.

* Queen Elizabeth.

D

Since worth, he cries, in these degenerate days, 35
Wants e'en the cheap reward of empty praise ;
In those curs'd walls, devote to vice and gain,
Since unrewarded science toils in vain ;
Since hope but soothes to double my distress,
And ev'ry moment leaves my little less ; 40
While yet my steady steps no staff sustains,
And life, still vig'rous, revels in my veins ;
Grant me, kind heaven, to find some happier place,
Where honesty and sense are no disgrace ;
Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play, 45
Some peaceful vale with nature's paintings gay,
Where once the harra's'd Briton found repose,
And safe in poverty defy'd his foes :
Some secret cell, ye pow'r's indulgent, give,
Let —— live here, for —— has learn'd to live. 50
Here let those reign whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white ;
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
And plead for pirates in the face of day ;
With slavish tenets taint our poison'd youth, 55
And lend a lie the confidence of truth.
Let such raise palaces, and manors buy,
Collect a tax, or farm a lottery ;
With warbling eunuchs fill our silenc'd stage,
And lull to servitude a thoughtless age. 60
Heroes, proceed ! what bounds your pride shall hold ?
What check restrain your thirst of power and gold ?
Behold rebellious virtue quite o'erthrown,
Behold our fame, our wealth, our lives your own.
To such the plunder of a land is given, 65
When public crimes inflame the wrath of heaven.
But what, my friend, what hope remains for me,
Who start at theft, and blush at perjury ?
Who scarce forbear, though Britain's court he sing,
To pluck a titled poet's borrow'd wing ; 70
A statesman's logic unconvinc'd can hear,
And dare to slumber o'er the Gazetteer ;
Despise a fool in half his pension dress'd,
And strive in vain to laugh at Clodio's jest.

Others, with softer smiles, and subtler art,
Can sap the principles, or taint the heart;
With more address a lover's note convey,
Or bribe a virgin's innocence away.

Well may they rise, while I, whose rustic tongue
Ne'er knew to puzzle right, or varnish wrong;
Spurn'd as a beggar, dreaded as a spy,
Live unregarded, unlamented die.

For what but social guilt the friend endears?
Who shares Orgilio's crimes, his fortune shares.

But thou, should tempting villany present
All Marlborough hoarded, or all Villiers spent,
Turn from the glitt'ring bribe thy scornful eye,
Nor sell for gold what gold could never buy,
The peaceful slumber, self-approving day,
Unfollied fame, and conscience ever gay.

The cheated nation's happy fav'rites see!
Mark whom the great caress, who frown on me!
London, the needy villain's gen'ral home
The common-sewer of Paris and of Rome;
With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.
Forgive my transports on a theme like this,
I cannot bear a French metropolis.

Illustrious Edward, from the realms of day,
The land of heroes and of saints survey;
Nor hope the British lineaments to trace,
The rustic grandeur, or the surly grace,
But lost in thoughtless ease and empty show,
Behold the warrior dwindled to a beau;
Sense, freedom, piety, refin'd away,
Of France the mimic, and of Spain the prey.

All that at home no more can beg or steal,
Or like a gibbet better than a wheel;
His'd from the stage, or hooted from the court,
Their air, their dress, their politics import;
Obsequious, artful, voluble, and gay,
On Britain's fond credulity they prey.
No gainful trade their industry can 'scape.
They sing, they dance, clean shoes, or cure a clap.

All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows, 115
And bid him go to hell, to hell he goes.

Ah! what avails it, that, from slav'ry far,
I drew the breath of life in English air;
Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
And lisp the tale of Henry's victories; 120
If the gull'd conqueror receives the chain,
And flattery prevails when arms are vain?

Studious to please, and ready to submit,
The supple Gaul was born a parasite:
Still to his int'rest true where'er he goes, 125
Wit, brav'ry, worth, his lavish tongue bestows;
In ev'ry face a thousand graces shine,
From ev'ry tongue flows harmony divine.

These arts in vain our rugged natives try,
Strain out, with fault'ring diffidence, a lie, 130
And get a kick for awkward flattery.

Besides, with justice, this discerning age
Admires their wond'rous talents for the stage:
Well may they venture on the mimic's art,
Who play from morn to night a borrow'd part; 135
Practis'd their master's notions to embrace,
Repeat his maxims, and reflect his face;
With ev'ry wild absurdity comply,
And view its object with another's eye;
To shake with laughter e'er the jest they hear, 140
To pour at will the counterfeited tear;
And as their patron hints the cold or heat,
To shake in dog-days, in December sweat.

How, when competitors like these contend,
Can surly virtue hope to fix a friend? 145
Slaves that with serious impudence beguile,
And lie without a blush, without a smile;
Exalt each trifle, ev'ry vice adore,
Your taste in snuff, your judgment in a whore;
Can Balbo's eloquence applaud, and swear 150
He gropes his breeches with a monarch's air.
For arts like these preferr'd, admir'd, carefs'd,
They first invade your table, then your breast;

Explore your secrets with insidious art,
 Watch the weak hour, and ranfack all the heart; 155
 Then soon your ill-plac'd confidence repay,
 Commence your lords, and govern or betray.

By numbers here from shame and censure free,
 All crimes are safe but hated poverty.
 This, only this, the rigid law pursues, 160
 This, only this, provokes the snarling muse.

The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak,
 Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke;
 With brisker air the filken courtiers gaze,
 And turn the various taunt a thousand ways. 165

Of all the griefs that harrafs the distress'd,
 Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
 Fate never wounds more deep the gen'rous heart,
 Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.

Has Heav'n reserv'd, in pity to the poor, 170
 No pathless waste or undiscover'd shore?

No secret island in the boundless main?
 No peaceful desert yet unclaim'd by Spain?
 Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore,
 And hear oppression's insolence no more. 175

This mournful truth is every where confess'd,
Slow rises worth, by poverty depress'd:
 But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,
 Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold;
 Where won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd, 180
 The groom retails the favours of his lord.

But hark! the affrighted crowd's tumultuous cries
 Roll through the streets, and thunder to the skies:
 Rais'd from some pleasing dream of wealth and pow'r,
 Some pompous palace, or some blissful bow'r, 185

Aghast you start, and scarce with aching sight
 Sustain the approaching fire's tremendous light;
 Swift from pursuing horrors take your way,
 And leave your little *all* to flames a prey;
 Then through the world a wretched vagrant roam,
 For where can starving merit find a home? 191

In vain your mournful narrative disclose,
 While all neglect, and most insult your woes,

Should Heaven's just bolts, Orgilio's wealth confound,
 And spread his flaming palace on the ground, 195
 Swift o'er the land the dismal rumour flies,
 And public mournings pacify the skies ;
 The leaureat tribe in venal verse relate,
 How virtue wars with persecuting fate ;
 With well-feign'd gratitude the pension'd band
 Refund the plunder of the beggar'd land. 201
 See ! while he builds, the gaudy vassals come,
 And crowd with sudden wealth the rising dome ;
 The price of boroughs and of souls restore ;
 And raise his treasures higher than before : 205
 Now bless'd with all the baubles of the great,
 The polish'd marble, and the shining plate,
 Orgilio sees the golden pile aspire,
 And hopes from angry Heav'n another fire.

Could'st thou resign the park and play content,
 For the fair banks of Severn or of Trent ; 211
 There might'st thou find some elegant retreat,
 Some hireling senator's deserted seat ;
 And stretch thy prospects o'er the smiling land,
 For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand ; 215
 There prune thy walks, support thy drooping flow'rs,
 Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bow'rs ;
 And, while thy grounds a cheap repast afford,
 Despise the dainties of a venal lord :
 There ev'ry bush with nature's music rings, 220
 There ev'ry breeze bears health upon its wings ;
 On all thy hours security shall smile,
 And bless thine evening walk and morning toil.

Prepare for death if here at night you roam,
 And sign your will before you sup from home. 225
 Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
 Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man ;
 Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
 Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.
 Yet e'en these heroes, mischievously gay, 230
 Lords of the street, and terrors of the way ;
 Flush'd as they are with folly, youth, and wine,
 Their prudent insults to the poor confine ;

Afar they mark the flambeaux's bright approach,
And shun the shining train, and golden coach. 235

In vain, these dangers past, your doors you close,
And hope the balmy blessings of repose:
Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair,
The midnight murd'rer bursts the faithless bar;
Invades the sacred hour of silent rest, 240
And leaves, unseen, a dagger in your breast.

Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.
Propose your schemes, ye senatorian band,
Whose ways and means support the sinking land;
Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring, 246
To rig another convoy for the king.*

A single gaol, in Alfred's golden reign,
Could half the nation's criminals contain;
Fair justice then, without constraint ador'd, 250
Held high the steady scale, but sheath'd the sword;
No spies were paid, no special juries known,
Blest age! but ah! how diff'rent from our own!

Much could I add—but see the boat at hand,
The tide retiring, calls me from the land: 255
Farewel!—When youth, and health, and fortune spent,
Thou fly'st for refuge to the wilds of Kent;
And tir'd like me with follies and with crimes,
In angry numbers warn'st succeeding times,
Then shall thy friend, nor thou refuse his aid, 260
Still foe to vice, forsake his Cambrian shade;
In virtue's cause once more exert his rage,
Thy satire point, and animate thy page. 263

THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES, IN IMITATION OF THE TENTH SATIRE OF JUVENAL.

LET observation with extensive view,
Survey mankind, from China to Peru;
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life;
Then say how hope and fear, desire and hate, 5
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate.

* The nation was discontented at the visits made by the king to Hanover.

Where wav'ring man, betray'd by vent'rous pride,
To tread the dreary paths without a guide ;
As treach'rous phantoms in the mist delude,
Shuns fancied ills, or chafes airy good. 10

How rarely reason guides the stubborn choice,
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the suppliant voice.
How nations sink, by darling schemes oppress'd,
When vengeance listens to the fool's request.

Fate wings with ev'ry wish th' afflictive dart, 15
Each gift of nature, and each grace of art,
With fatal heat impetuous courage glows,
With fatal sweetness elocution flows,
Impeachment stops the speaker's pow'rful breath,
And restless fire precipitates on death. 20

But scarce observed, the knowing and the bold,
Fall in the gen'ral massacre of gold ;
Wide-wasting pest ! that rages unconfin'd,
And crowds with crimes the records of mankind ;
For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws, 25
For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws ;
Wealth heap'd on wealth, nor truth nor safety buys,
The dangers gather as the treasures rise.

Let hist'ry tell where rival kings command,
And dubious title shakes the maddened land, 30
When statutes glean the refuse of the sword,
How much more safe the vassal than the lord :
Low skulks the hind beneath the reach of pow'r,
And leaves the wealthy traitor in the Tow'r,
Untouch'd his cottage, and his slumbers sound, 35
Though confiscation's vultures hover round.

The needy traveller, serene and gay,
Walks the wild heath, and sings his toil away.
Does envy seize thee ? crush th' upbraiding joy,
Increase his riches and his peace destroy, 40
Now fears in dire vicissitude invade,
The rustling brake alarms, and quiv'ring shade,
Nor light nor darkness brings his pain relief,
One shows the plunder, and one hides the thief.
Yet still one gen'ral cry the skies assails, 45
And gain and grandeur load the tainted gales ;

Few know the toiling statesman's fear or care,
Th' insidious rival and the gaping heir.

Once more, Democritus, arise on earth,
With cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth, 50
See motley life in modern trappings dress'd,
And feed with varied fools th' eternal jest :
Thou who couldst laugh where want enchain'd caprice,
Toil crush'd conceit, and man was of a piece ;
Where wealth unlov'd without a mourner dy'd ; 55
And scarce a sycophant was fed by pride ;
Where ne'er was known the form of mock debate,
Or seen a new-made mayor's unweildy state ;
Where change of fav'rites made no change of laws,
And senates heard before they judg'd a cause ; 60
How wouldst thou shake at Britain's modish tribe,
Dart the quick taunt, and edge the piercing gibe ?
Attentive truth and nature to descry,
And pierce each scene with philosophic eye,
To thee were solemn toys or empty show, 65
The robes of pleasure, and the veils of woe :
All aid the farce, and all thy mirth maintain,
Whose joys are causeless, or whose griefs are vain.

Such was the scorn that fill'd the sage's mind,
Renew'd at every glance on human kind ; 70
How just that scorn e'er yet thy voice declare,
Search every state, and canvass ev'ry pray'r.

Unnumber'd suppliant's crowd preferment's gate,
A thirst for wealth, and burning to be great ;
Delusive fortune hears the incessant call, 75
They mount, they shine, evaporate, and fall.
On ev'ry stage the foes of peace attend,
Hate dogs their flight, and insult mocks their end.
Love ends with hope, the sinking statesman's door
Pours in the morning worshipper no more ; 80
For growing names the weekly scribbler lies,
To growing wealth the dedicator flies ;
From ev'ry room descends the painted face,
That hung the bright palladium of the place ;
And smok'd in kitchens, or in auctions sold, 85
To better features yields the frame of gold ;

For now no more we trace in ev'ry line,
Heroic worth, benevolence divine :
The form distorted justifies the fall,
And detestation rides th' indignant wall. 90

But will not Britain hear the last appeal,
Sign her foes doom, or guard her fav'rites' zeal ?
Through freedom's sons no more remonstrance rings,
Degrading nobles, and controlling kings ;
Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats, 95
And ask no questions but the price of votes ;
With weekly libels and septennial ale,
Their wish is full to riot and to rail,

In full-blown dignity see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand ; 100
To him the church, the realm, their powers consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine ;
Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,
His smile alone security bestows :

Still to new heights his restless wishes tour ; 105
Claim leads to claim, and pow'r advances pow'r ;
Till conquest unresisted ceas'd to please,
And rights submitted, left him none to seize.

At length his sov'reign frowns—the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate ;
Where'er he turns he meets a stranger's eye, 110
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly ;
Now drops at once the pride of awful state,
The golden canopy, the glitt'ring plate,
The regal palace, the luxurious board, 115
The liv'ried army, and the menial lord.

With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.

Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings,
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings. 120

Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
Shall Wolsey's wealth, with Wolsey's end, be thine ?
Or liv'st thou now, with safer pride content,
The wisest justice on the banks of Trent ?

For why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate, 125
On weak foundations raise th' enormous weight ?

Why but to sink beneath misfortune's blow
With louder ruin to the gulphs below?
What gave great Villiers to the assassin's knife,
And fix'd disease on Harley's closing life? 130
What murder'd Wentworth, and what exil'd Hyde,
By kings protected, and to kings ally'd?
What but their wish indulg'd, in courts to shine,
And pow'r too great to keep or to resign?

When first the college rolls receive his name,
The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame; 136
Resistless burns the fever of renown,
Caught from the strong contagion of the gown:
O'er Bodley's dome his future labours spread,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head. 140
Are these thy views? proceed, illustrious youth,
And Virtue guard thee to the throne of Truth!
Yet, should thy soul indulge the gen'rous heat,
Till captive Science yields her last retreat;
Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray, 145
And pour on misty doubt resistless day;
Should no false kindness lure to loose delight,
Nor praise relax, nor difficulty fright;
Should tempting novelty thy cell refrain,
And sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain; 150
Should beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
Nor claim the triumph of a letter'd heart;
Should no disease thy torpid veins invade,
Nor melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade;
Yet hope not life from grief or danger free, 155
Nor think the doom of man revers'd for thee:
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause a while from learning, to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail. 160
See nations, slowly wise, and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,
Hear Lydiat's life, and Galileo's end.

Nor deem, when learning her last prize bestows, 165
The glitt'ring eminence exempt from foes;

See when the vulgar 'scapes, despis'd or aw'd,
 Rebellion's vengeful talons seize on Laud.
 From meaner minds, though smaller fines content,
 The plunder'd palace, or sequester'd rent ; 170
 Mark'd out by dangerous parts he meets the shock,
 And fatal learning leads him to the block :
 Around his tomb let art and genius weep,
 But hear his death, ye blockheads, hear and sleep.

The festal blazes, the triumphal show, 175
 The ravish'd standard, and the captive foe,
 The senate's thanks, the Gazette's pompous tale,
 With force resistless o'er the brave prevail.
 Such bribes the rapid Greek o'er Asia whirl'd,
 For such the steady Romans shook the world ; 180
 For such in distant lands the Britons shine,
 And stain with blood the Danube or the Rhine ;
 This power has praise, that virtue scarce can warm,
 Till fame supplies the universal charm.
 Yet reason frowns on war's unequal game, 185
 Where wasted nations raise a single name,
 And mortgag'd states their grandfire's wreaths regret,
 From age to age in everlasting debt ;
 Wreaths which at last the dear-bought right convey
 To rust on medals or on stones decay. 190

On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
 How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide ;
 A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
 No dangers fright him, and no labours tire ;
 O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain, 195
 Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain ;
 No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
 War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field ;
 Behold surrounding kings their power combine,
 And one capitulate, and one resign ; 200
 Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain ;
 " Think nothing gain'd," he cries, " till nought re-
 " On Muscow's walls till Gothic standards fly, [main,
 " And all be mine beneath the polar sky."
 The march begins in military state, 205
 And nations on his eye suspended wait ;

Stern famine guards the solitary coast,
 And winter barricades the realms of frost ;
 He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay ;
 Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day : 210
 The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
 And shews his miseries in distant lands ;
 Condemn'd a needy suppliant to wait,
 While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
 But did not chance at length her error mend ? 215
 Did no subverted empire mark his end ?
 Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound ?
 Or hostile millions press him to the ground ?
 His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
 A petty fortress, and a dubious hand ; 220
 He left the name at which the world grew pale,
 To point a moral, or adorn a tale.

All times their scenes of pompous woes afford,
 From Persia's tyrant to Bavaria's lord.
 In gay hostility, and barb'rous pride, 225
 With half mankind embattled at his side,
 Great Xerxes comes to seize the certain prey,
 And starves exhausted regions in his way ;
 Attendant flattery counts his myriads o'er,
 Till counted myriads sooth his pride no more ; 230
 Fresh praise is try'd, till madness fires his mind,
 The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind ;
 New pow'rs are claim'd, new pow'rs are still bestow'd,
 Till rude resistance lops the spreading god ;
 The daring Greeks deride the martial show, 235
 And heap their valleys with the gaudy foe ;
 Th' insulted sea with humbler thoughts he gains,
 A single skiff to speed his flight remains ;
 Th' encumbered oar scarce leaves the dreaded coast
 Through purple billows and a floating host. 240

The bold Bavarian, in a luckless hour,
 Tries the dread summits of Cæsarean power,
 With unexpected legions bursts away,
 And sees defenceless realms receive his sway ;
 Short sway ! fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
 The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms ; 246

From hill to hill the beacon's rousing blaze
Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise.
The fierce Croation, and the wild Hufar,
With all the sons of ravage crowd the war ; 250
The baffled prince in honour's flattering bloom
Of hasty greatness finds the fatal doom ;
His foes' derision, and his subjects' blame,
And steals to death from anguish and from shame.

Enlarge my life with multitude of days, 255
In health, in sickness, thus the suppliant prays ;
Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know
That life protracted is protracted woe.

Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the passages of joy : 260
In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
The fruit autumnal, and the vernal flower,
With listless eyes the dotard views the store,
He views, and wonders that they please no more.
Now pall the tasteless meats, and joyless wines, 265
And luxury with sighs her slave resigns.

Approach, ye minstrels, try the soothing strain,
Diffuse the tuneful lenitives of pain :
No sounds, alas ! would touch th' impervious ear,
Though dancing mountains witnessed Orpheus near :
Nor lute nor lyre his feeble pow'rs attend, 271
Nor sweeter music of a virtuous friend,
But everlasting dictates crowd his tongue,
Perversely grave, or positively wrong.

The still returning tale, and ling'ring jest, 275
Perplex the fawning niece and pamper'd guest ;
While growing hopes scarce awe the gathering sneer,
And scarce a legacy can bribe to hear ;
The watchful guests still hint the last offence,
The daughter's petulance, the son's expence, 280
Improve his heady rage with treach'rous skill,
And mould his passions till they make his will.

Unnumber'd maladies his joints invade,
Lay siege to life, and press the dire blockade ;
But unextinguish'd av'rice still remains, 285
And dreaded losses aggravate his pains ;

He turns, with anxious heart and crippled hands,
 His bonds of debt, and mortgages of lands;
 Or views his coffers with suspicious eyes,
 Unlocks his gold, and counts it till he dies. 290

But grant, the virtues of a temp'rate prime
 Bless with an age exempt from scorn or crime;
 An age that melts with unperceiv'd decay,
 And glides in modest innocence away;
 Whose peaceful day benevolence endears, 295
 Whose night congratulating conscience cheers;
 The gen'ral fav'rite as the gen'ral friend:
 Such age there is, and who shall wish its end?

Yet e'en on this her load misfortune flings,
 To press the weary minutes flagging wings; 300
 New sorrow rises as the day returns,
 A sister sickens, or a daughter mourns.
 Now kindred merit fills the sable bier,
 Now lacerated friendship claims a tear.
 Year chafes year, decay pursues decay, 305
 Still drops some joy from with'ring life away;
 New forms arise, and diff'rent views engage,
 Superfluous lags the vet'ran on the stage,
 Till pitying nature signs the last release,
 And bids afflicted worth retire to peace. 310

But few there are whom hours like these await,
 Who set unclouded in the gulfs of fate.
 From Lydia's monarch should the search descend,
 By Solon caution'd to regard his end,
 In life's last scene what prodigies surprise, 315
 Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise?
 From Marlb'rough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
 And swift expires a driv'ler and a show.

The teeming mother, anxious for her race,
 Begs for each birth the fortune of a face: 320
 Yet Vane could tell what ills from beauty spring;
 And Sedley curs'd the form that pleas'd a king.
 Ye nymphs of rosy lips and radiant eyes,
 Whom pleasure keeps too busy to be wise,
 Whom joys with soft varieties invite, 325
 By day the frolic, and the dance by night,

Who frown with vanity, who smile with art,
 And ask the latest fashion of the heart,
 What care, what rules your heedless charms shall save,
 Each nymph your rival, and each youth your slave?
 Against your fame with fondness hate combines, 331
 The rival batters, and the lovers mines.
 With distant voice neglected virtue calls,
 Less heard and less, the faint remonstrance falls;
 Tir'd with contempt, she quits the slipp'ry reign, 335
 And pride and prudence take her seat in vain.
 In crowd at once, where none the pass defend,
 The harmless freedom and the private friend.
 The guardians yield, by force superior ply'd;
 To int'rest, prudence; and to flattery, pride. 340
 Here beauty falls betray'd, despis'd, distress'd,
 And hissing infamy proclaims the rest.

Where then shall hope and fear their objects find?
 Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
 Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate, 345
 Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
 Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
 No cries invoke the mercies of the skies;
 Inquirer, cease, petitions yet remain,
 Which heaven may hear, nor deem religion vain. 350
 Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
 But leave to heaven the measure and the choice.
 Safe in his pow'r, whose eyes discern afar
 The secret ambush of a specious pray'r.
 Implore his aid, in his decisions rest, 355
 Secure whate'er he gives, he gives the best.
 Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
 And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
 Pour forth thy fervors for a healthful mind,
 Obedient passions, and a will resign'd; 360
 For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
 For patience, sov'reign, o'er transmuted ill;
 For faith, that panting for a happier seat,
 Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat:
 These goods for man the laws of heaven ordain, 365
 These goods he grants, who grants the pow'r to gain;

With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

368

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. GARRICK,

AT THE OPENING OF THE THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY-LANE, 1747.

WHEN learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakspeare rose ;
Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new ;
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign, 5
And panting time toil'd after him in vain,
His powerful strokes presiding truth impress'd,
And unresisted passion storm'd the breast.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule ; 10
His studious patience and laborious art,
By regular approach essay'd the heart :
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays ;
For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise,
A mortal born he met the general doom, 15
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wish'd for Jonson's art, or Shakspeare's flame.
Themselves they studied ; as they felt, they writ :
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit. 20
Vice always found a sympathetic friend ;
They pleas'd their age, and did not aim to mend.
Yet bards like these aspir'd to lasting praise,
And proudly hop'd to pimp in future days.
Their cause was gen'ral, their supports were strong ;
Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long : 26
Till Shame regain'd the post that Sense betray'd,
And Virtue call'd Oblivion to her aid.
Then crush'd by rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,
For years the pow'r of tragedy declin'd ; 30
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
Till declamation roar'd, whilst passion slept ;
Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,
Philosophy remain'd though Nature fled.

But forc'd, at length, her ancient reign to quit, 35
 She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of wit;
 Exulting Folly hail'd the joyous day,
 And pantomime and song confirm'd her sway.

But who the coming changes can presage,
 And mark the future periods of the stage? 40
 Perhaps if skill could distant times explore,
 New Behns, new Durseys yet remain in store;
 Perhaps where Lear has rav'd, and Hamlet dy'd,
 On flying cars new forcerers may ride;
 Perhaps (for who can guess the effects of chance) 45
 Here Hunt* may box, or Mahomet† may dance.
 Hard is his lot that here by fortune plac'd,
 Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;
 With every meteor of caprice must play,
 And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day. 50
 Ah! let not censure term our fate our choice,
 The stage but echoes back the public voice;
 The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
 For we that live to please, must please to live.

Then prompt no more the follies you decry, 55
 As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die;
 'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence
 Of rescu'd nature, and reviving sense;
 To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
 For useful mirth and salutary woe; 60
 Bid scenic virtue form the rising age,
 And truth diffuse her radiance from the stage. 62

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. GARRICK BEFORE THE MASQUE OF COMUS
Acted for the Benefit of Milton's grand-daughter.

YE patriot crowds who burn for England's fame,
 Ye nymphs whose bosoms beat at Milton's name,
 Whose generous zeal, unbought by flattering rhymes,
 Shames the mean pensions of Augustan times;
 Immortal patrons of succeeding days, 5
 Attend this prelude of perpetual praise;
 Let wit condemn'd the feeble war to wage,
 With close malevolence, or public rage;

* A famous stage boxer.

† A rope dancer.

Let study, worn with virtue's fruitless lore,
Behold this theatre, and grieve no more. 10
This night, distinguish'd by your smiles, shall tell
That never Britain can in vain excel:
The slightest arts futurity shall trust,
And rising ages hasten to be just.

At length our mighty bard's victorious lays 15
Fill the loud voice of universal praise;
And baffled spite, with hopeless anguish dumb,
Yields to renown the centuries to come;
With ardent haste each candidate of fame,
Ambitious catches at his tow'ring name; 20
He sees, and pitying sees, vain wealth bestow
Those pageant honours which he scorn'd below,
While crowds aloft the laureat bust behold,
Or trace his form on circulating gold.
Unknown—unheeded, long his offspring lay, 25
And want hung threat'ning o'er her slow decay.
What though she shine with no Miltonian fire,
No favouring muse her morning dreams inspire?
Yet softer claims the melting heart engage,
Her youth laborious, and her blameless age; 30
Hers the mild merits of domestic life,
The patient sufferer, and the faithful wife.
Thus grac'd with humble virtue's native charms
Her grandfire leaves her in Britannia's arms;
Secure with peace, with competence to dwell, 35
While tutelary nations guard her cell.
Yours is the charge, ye fair, ye wise, ye brave!
'Tis yours to crown desert—beyond the grave. 38

PROLOGUE

TO THE COMEDY OF THE GOOD-NATURED MAN, 1769.

PREST by the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind,
With cool submission joins the lab'ring train,
And social sorrow loses half its pain;
Our anxious bard without complaint may share 5
This bustling season's epidemic care;

Like Cæsar's pilate dignify'd by fate,
 Tost in one common storm with all the great;
 Distrest alike the statesman and the wit,
 When one the borough courts, and one the pit. 10
 The busy candidates for power and fame
 Have hopes, and fears, and wishes just the same;
 Disabled both to combat, or to fly,
 Must hear all taunts, and hear without reply.
 Uncheck'd on both, loud rabbles vent their rage, 15
 As mongrels bay the lion in a cage.
 Th' offended burghers hoards his angry tale,
 For that blest year when all that vote may rail.
 Their schemes of spite the poet's foes dismiss,
 Till that glad night when all that hate may hiss. 20
 "This day the powder'd curls and golden coat,"
 Says swelling Crispin, "begg'd a cobbler's vote;"
 "This night our wit," the pert apprentice cries,
 "Lies at my feet; I hiss him, and he dies."
 The great, 'tis true, can charm th' electing tribe, 25
 The bard may supplicate, but cannot bribe.
 Yet judg'd by those whose voices ne'er were sold,
 He feels no want of ill-persuading gold;
 But confident of praise, if praise be due,
 Trusts without fear to merit and to you. 30

PROLOGUE

TO THE COMEDY OF A WORD TO THE WISE,
Spoken by Mr. Hull.

THIS night presents a play which public rage,
 Or right, or wrong, once hooted from the stage.
 From zeal or malice, now no more we dread,
 For English vengeance wars not with the dead.
 A gen'rous foe regards with pitying eye. 5
 The man whom fate has laid—where all must lie.
 To wit, reviving from its authors dust,
 Be kind, ye judges, or, at least, be just.
 For no renew'd hostilities invade
 Th' oblivious grave's inviolable shade. 10
 Let one great payment ev'ry claim appease,
 And him who cannot hurt, allow to please;

And nature on her naked breasts
Delights to catch the gales of Life.
Vide Spring Page 51 line 1



To please by scenes unconscious of offence,
 By harmless merriment, or useful sense.
 Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays, 15
 Approve it only—'tis too late to praise.
 If want of skill, or want of care appear,
 Forbear to hiss—the poet cannot hear.
 By all like him must praise and blame be found,
 At best a fleeting dream, or empty sound. 20
 Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night
 When liberal pity dignify'd delight;
 When Pleasure fir'd her torch at Virtue's flame,
 And mirth was bounty with an humbler name. 24

SPRING.

STERN Winter now, by Spring repress'd,
 Forbears the long continued strife;
 And nature on her naked breast,
 Delights to catch the gales of life.

Now o'er the rural kingdom roves 5
 Soft Pleasure with her laughing train,
 Love warbles in the vocal groves,
 And vegetation plants the plain.

Unhappy! whom to beds of pain
 Arthritic tyranny consigns; 10
 Whom smiling Nature courts in vain,
 Though Rapture sings and Beauty shines.

Yet though my limbs disease invades,
 Her wings Imagination tries,
 And bears me to the peaceful shades 15
 Where ——'s humble turrets rise.

Here stop, my soul, thy rapid flight,
 Nor from the pleasing groves depart,
 Where first great Nature charm'd my sight,
 Where wisdom first inform'd my heart. 20

Here let me through the vales pursue
 A guide—a father—and a friend,
 Once more great Nature's works renew,
 Once more on wisdom's voice attend.

From false careſſes, cauſeleſs ſtrife,
Wild hope, vain fear, alike remov'd;
Here let me learn the uſe of life,
When beſt enjoy'd—when moſt improv'd.

25

Teach me, thou venerable bower,
Cool meditation's quiet ſeat,
The gen'rous ſcorn of venal power,
The ſilent grandeur of retreat.

30

When pride by guilt to greatneſs climbs,
Or raging factions ruſh to war,
Here let me learn to ſhun the crimes
I can't prevent, and will not ſhare.

35

But leſt I fall by ſubtler foes,
Bright wiſdom teach me Curio's art,
The ſwelling paſſions to compoſe,
And quell the rebels of the art.

40

MIDSUMMER.

O PHŒBUS! down the weſtern ſky,
Far hence diſſuſe thy burning ray;
Thy light to diſtant worlds ſupply,
And wake them to the cares of day.

Come gentle eve, the friend of care,
Come Cynthia, lovely queen of night!
Refresh me with a cooling breeze,
And cheer me with a lambent light.

5

Lay me where o'er the verdant ground
Her living carpet nature ſpreads;
Where the green bower with roſes crown'd,
In ſhowers its fragrant foliage ſheds.

10

Improve the peaceful hour with wine,
Let muſic die along the grove;
Around the bowl let myrtles twine,
And ev'ry ſtrain be tun'd to love.

15

Come, Stella, queen of all my heart!
Come, born to fill its vaſt deſires!

Thy looks perpetual joys impart,
Thy voice perpetual love inspires. 20

While all my wish and thine compleat,
By turns we languish and we burn,
Let sighing gales our sighs repeat,
Our murmurs—murm'ring brooks return.

Let me, when nature calls to rest, 25
And blushing skies the morn foretel,
Sink on the down of Stella's breast,
And bid the waking world farewell. 28

AUTUMN.

ALAS! with swift and silent pace,
Impatient time rolls on the year!
The seasons change, and nature's face
Now sweetly smiles, nor frowns severe.

'Twas Spring, 'twas Summer, all was gay, 5
Now Autumn bends a cloudy brow;
The flowers of Spring are swept away,
And Summer fruits desert the bough.

The verdant leaves that play'd on high,
And wanton'd on the western breeze, 10
Now trod in dust neglected lie,
As Boreas strips the bending trees.

The fields that wav'd with golden grain,
As russet heaths are wild and bare;
Not moist with dew, but drench'd in rain, 15
Nor health, nor pleasure, wanders there.

No more while through the midnight shade,
Beneath the moon's pale orb I stray,
Soft pleasing woes my heart invade,
As Progne pours the melting lay. 20

From this capricious clime she soars,
O! would some god but wings supply!
To where each morn the Spring restores,
Companion of her flight, I'd fly.

Vain wish ! me fate compels to bear 25
The downward season's iron reign,
Compels to breath polluted air,
And shiver on a blasted plain.

What blifs to life can Autumn yield,
If glooms, and showers, and storms prevail ; 30
And Ceres flies the naked field,
And flowers, and fruits, and Phœbus fail ?

Oh ! what remains, what lingers yet,
To cheer me in the dark'ning hour ?
The grape remains, the friend of wit, 35
In love and mirth of mighty power.

Haste—press the clusters, fill the bowl ;
Apollo ! shoot thy parting ray :
This gives the sunshine of the soul,
This god of health, and verse, and day. 40

Still, still the jocund strain shall flow,
The pulse with vigorous rapture beat ;
My Stella with new charms shall glow,
And every blifs in wine shall meet. 44

WINTER.

NO more the morn, with tepid rays,
Unfolds the flow'rs of various hue ;
Noon spreads no more the genial blaze,
Nor gentle eve distils the dew.

The ling'ring hours prolong the night, 5
Usurping darkness shares the day ;
Her mists restrain the force of light,
And Phœbus holds a doubtful sway.

By gloomy twilight half reveal'd,
With sighs we view the hoary hill, 10
The leafless wood, the naked field,
The snow-topt cot, the frozen rill.

No music warbles through the grove,
No vivid colours paint the plain ;

No more with devious steps I rove
Through verdant paths now fought in vain. 15

Aloud the driving tempest roars,
Congeal'd, impetuous showers descend;
Haste, close the windows, bar the doors,
Fate leaves me Stella and a friend. 20

In nature's aid let art supply
With light and heat my little sphere;
Rouze, rouze the fire, and pile it high,
Light up a constellation here.

Let music sound the voice of joy, 25
Or mirth repeat the jocund tale;
Let love his wanton wiles employ,
And o'er the season wine prevail.

Yet time life's dreary winter brings,
When mirth's gay tale shall please no more, 30
Nor music charm—though Stella sings,
Nor love nor wine the spring restore.

Catch, then, O! catch the transient hour,
Improve each moment as it flies;
Life's a short summer—man a flower,
He dies—alas! how soon he dies! 36

THE WINTER'S WALK.

BEHOLD, my fair, where'er we rove,
What dreary prospects round us rise,
The naked hill, the leafless grove,
The hoary ground, the frowning skies.

Not only thought the wasted plain, 5
Stern Winter in thy force confess'd,
Still wider spreads thy horrid reign,
I feel thy power usurp my breast.

Enlivening hope, and fond desire,
Resign the heart to spleen and care; 10
Scarce frightened love maintains her fire,
And rapture saddens to despair.

In groundless hope and causeless fear,
 Unhappy man ! behold thy doom ;
 Still changing with the changeful year,
 The slave of sunshine and of gloom.

15

Tir'd with vain joys, and false alarms,
 With mental and corporeal strife,
 Snatch me, my Stella, to thy arms,
 And screen me from the ills of life.

20

TO MISS *****.

On her giving the Author a Gold and Silk network Purse of her own weaving.

THOUGH gold and silk their charms unite
 To make thy curious web delight,
 In vain the varied work would shine
 If wrought by any hand but thine ;
 Thy hand that knows the subtler art,
 To weave those nets that catch the heart.

5

Spread out by me, the roving coin
 Thy nets may catch, but not confine ;
 Nor can I hope thy silken chain
 The glittering vagrants shall restrain.

10

Why, Stella, was it then decreed
 The heart once caught should ne'er be freed.

12

EPIGRAM

ON GEORGE II. AND COLLEY CIBBER, ESQ.

AUGUSTUS still survives in Maro's strain,
 And Spenser's verse prolongs Eliza's reign,
 Great George's acts let tuneful Cibber sing,
 For nature form'd the poet for the king.

4

STELLA IN MOURNING.

WHEN lately Stella's form display'd
 The beauties of the gay brocade,
 The nymphs, who found their power decline,
 Proclaim'd her not so fair as fine.

" Fate ! snatch away the bright disguise,

5

" And let the goddess trust her eyes."

Thus blindly pray'd the fretful fair,

And Fate malicious heard the prayer ;

But brighten'd by the sable dress,
 As virtue rises in distress,
 Since Stella still extends her reign,
 Ah! how shall envy sooth her pain?
 Th' adoring youth and envious fair,
 Henceforth shall form one common prayer;
 And love and hate alike implore
 The skies—"That Stella mourn no more."

10

16

TO STELLA.

NOT the soft sighs of vernal gales,
 The fragrance of the flow'ry vales,
 The murmurs of the crystal rill,
 The vocal grove, the verdant hill;
 Not all their charms, though all unite,
 Can touch my bosom with delight.

5

Not all the gems on India's shore.
 Not all Peru's unbounded store,
 Not all the power, nor all the fame,
 That heroes, kings, or poets claim;
 Nor knowledge, which the learn'd approve,
 To form one wish my soul can move.

10

Yet nature's charms allure my eyes.
 And knowledge, wealth, and fame I prize;
 Fame, wealth, and knowledge I obtain,
 Nor seek I nature's charms in vain;
 In lovely Stella all combine,
 And, lovely Stella, thou art mine.

15

18

VERSES,

Written at the Request of a Gentleman to whom a Lady had given a Sprig
 of Myrtle.

WHAT hopes, what terrors, does this gift create,
 Ambiguous emblem of uncertain fate.
 The myrtle (ensign of supreme command,
 Consign'd to Venus by Melissa's hand)
 Not less capricious than a reigning fair,
 Oft favours, oft rejects a lover's prayer.
 In myrtle shades oft sings the happy swain,
 In myrtle shades despairing ghosts complain.

5

The myrtle crowns the happy lovers' heads
 The unhappy lovers' graves the myrtle spreads. 10
 Oh! then, the meaning of thy gift impart,
 And ease the throbbings of an anxious heart.
 Soon must this sprig, as you shall fix its doom,
 Adorn Philander's head, or grace his tomb. 13

TO LADY FIREBRACE.

AT BURY ASSIZES.

AT length must Suffolk beauties shine in vain,
 So long renown'd in B——n's deathless strain?
 Thy charms at least, fair Firebrace, might inspire
 Some zealous bard to wake the sleeping lyre;
 For such thy beauteous mind and lovely face, 5
 Thou seem'st at once, bright nymph, a muse and grace.

TO LYCE,

AN ELDERLY LADY.

YE nymphs whom starry rays invest,
 By flattering poets given,
 Who shine, by lavish lovers drest,
 In all the pomp of heaven.

Engross not all the beams on high, 5
 Which gild a lover's lays,
 But, as your sister of the sky,
 Let Lyce share the praise.

Her silver locks display the moon,
 Her brows a cloudy show, 10
 Strip'd rainbows round her eyes are seen,
 And showers from either flow.

Her teeth the night with darkness dyes;
 She's starr'd with pimples o'er;
 Her tongue like nimble lightning plies, 15
 And can with thunder roar.

But some Zelinda, while I sing,
 Denies my Lyce shines;
 And all the pens of Cupid's wing
 Attack my gentle lines. 20

Yet, spite of fair Zelinda's eye,
And all her bards express,
My Lyce makes as good a sky,
And I but flatter less.

24

ON THE DEATH OF Mr. ROBERT LEVETT,

A PRACTISER IN PHYSIC.

CONDEMN'D to hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away.

Well try'd through many a varying year,
See Levett to the gravedescend,
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of ev'ry friendless name the friend.

5

Yet still he fills affection's eye,
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;
Nor letter'd arrogance deny
Thy praise to merit unrefin'd

10

When fainting nature call'd for aid,
And hov'ring death prepar'd the blow,
His vigorous remedy display'd
The power of art without the show.

15

In mis'ry's darkest cavern known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely want retir'd to die.

20

No summons mock'd by chill delay,
No petty gain disdain'd by pride;
The modest wants of ev'ry day
The toil of every day supply'd

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
And sure the Eternal Master found
The single talent well employ'd.

25

The busy day—the peaceful night,
Unfelt, unclouded, glided by;

30

His frame was firm—his powers were bright,
Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then with no fiery throbbing pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way.

36

EPITAPH ON CLAUDE PHILLIPS,

An Itinerant Musician.

PHILLIPS! whose touch harmonious could remove
The pangs of guilty pow'r and hapless love,
Rest here, distressed by poverty no more,
Find here that calm thou gav'st so oft before;
Sleep undisturb'd within this peaceful shrine,
Till angels wake thee with a note like thine.

6

EPITAPH

ON SIR THOMAS HANMER, BART.

THOU who survey'st these walls with curious eye,
Pause at this tomb where Hanmer's ashes lie;
His various worth through varied life attend,
And learn his virtues while thou mourn'st his end.

His force of genius burn'd in early youth,
With thirst of knowledge, and with love of truth;
His learning, join'd with each endearing art,
Charm'd ev'ry ear, and gain'd on ev'ry heart.

5

Thus early wise, th' endanger'd realm to aid,
His country call'd him from the studious shade;
In life's first bloom his public toils began,
At once commenc'd the senator and man.

10

In business dext'rous, weighty in debate,
Thrice ten long years he labour'd for the state;
In every speech persuasive wisdom flow'd,
In every act refulgent virtue glow'd:
Suspended faction ceas'd from rage and strife,
To hear his eloquence, and praise his life.

15

Resistless merit fix'd the senate's choice,
Who hail'd him Speaker with united voice.
Illustrious age! how bright thy glories shone,
While Hanmer fill'd the chair—and Anne the throne!

20

Then when dark arts obscur'd each fierce debate,
 When mutual frauds perplex'd the maze of state,
 The moderator firmly mild appear'd—
 Beheld with love, with veneration heard. 25

This task perform'd—he sought no gainful post,
 Nor wish'd to glitter at his country's cost;
 Strict on the right he fix'd his steadfast eye,
 With temperate zeal and wise anxiety; 30
 Nor e'er from virtue's paths was lur'd aside,
 To pluck the flow'rs of pleasure, or of pride,
 Her gifts despis'd, corruption blush'd and fled,
 And fame pursu'd him where conviction led.

Age call'd, at length, his active mind to rest, 35
 With honour fated, and with cares oppress'd:
 To letter'd ease retir'd and honest mirth,
 To rural grandeur and domestic worth:
 Delighted still to please mankind or mend,
 The patriot's fire yet sparkled in the friend. 40

Calm conscience then, his former life survey'd,
 And recollected toils endear'd the shade,
 Till nature call'd him to her general doom,
 And virtue's sorrow dignified his tomb. 44

ON THE DEATH OF STEPHEN GREY, F. R. S.

THE ELECTRICIAN.

LONG hast thou borne the burden of the day,
 Thy task is ended, venerable Grey!
 No more shall art thy dextrous hand require,
 To break the sleep of elemental fire:
 To rouse the power that actuate nature's frame, 5
 The momentaneous shock, th' electric flame;
 The flame which first, weak pupil to thy lore,
 I saw, condemn'd alas to see no more.

Now, hoary sage, pursue thy happy flight
 With swifter motion, haste to purer light, 10
 Where Bacon waits, with Newton and with Boyle,
 To hail thy genius and applaud thy toil,
 Where intuition breathes through time and space,
 And mocks experiment's successive race;

Sees tardy Science toil at nature's laws, 15
And wonders how th' effect obscures the cause.

Yet not to deep research or happy guesses,
Is view'd the life of hope, the death of peace;
Unblest the man whom philosophic rage
Shall tempt to lose the Christian in the sage: 20
Not art but goodness pour'd the sacred ray
That cheer'd the parting hours of humble Grey. 22

TO MISS HICKMAN,
PLAYING ON THE SPINNET.

BRIGHT Stella, form'd for universal reign,
Too well you know to keep the slaves you gain:
When in your eyes resistless lightnings play,
Aw'd into love our conquer'd hearts obey,
And yield reluctant to despotic sway: 5
But when your music sooths the raging pain,
We bid propitious heaven prolong your reign,
We bless the tyrant, and we hug the chain.

When old Timotheus struck the vocal string,
Ambition's fury fir'd the Grecian king: 10
Unbounded projects lab'ring in his mind,
He pants for room in one poor world confin'd.
Thus wak'd to rage, by music's dreadful pow'r,
He bids the sword destroy, the flame devour.
Had Stella's gentler touches mov'd the lyre, 15
Soon had the monarch felt a nobler fire:
No more delighted with destructive war,
Ambitious only now to please the fair;
Resign'd his thirst of empire to her charms,
And found a thousand worlds in Stella's arms. 20

PARAPHRASE

OF PROVERBS, CHAP. IV. VERSES 6—II.

“Go to the Ant thou Sluggard.”

TURN on the prudent ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, sluggard, and be wise.
No stern command, no monitory voice
Prescribes her duties or directs her choice;
Yet timely provident she hastes away, 5
To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;

When fruitful summer loads the teeming plain,
 She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
 How long shall sloth usurp thy useleſs hours,
 Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy pow'rs? 10
 While artful ſhades thy downy couch encloſe,
 And ſoft ſolicitation courts reſoſe.
 Amidſt the drowſy charms of dull delight,
 Year chafes year with unremitted flight,
 Till want now following fraudulent and ſlow,
 Shall ſpring to ſeize thee like an ambuſh'd foe. 16

HORACE

LIB. 4. ODE VII. TRANSLATED.

THE ſnow diſſolv'd, no more is ſeen,
 The field and woods, behold! are green.
 The changing year renews the plain,
 The rivers know their banks again,
 The ſprightly nymph and naked grace 5
 The mazy dance together trace.
 The changing year's ſucceſſive plan
 Proclaims mortality to man.
 Rough winter's blaſts to ſpring give way,
 Spring yields to ſummer's ſovereign ray; 10
 Then ſummer ſinks in autumn's reign,
 And winter chills the world again:
 Her loſſes ſoon the moon ſupplies,
 But wretched man, when once he lies
 Where Priam and his ſons are laid, 15
 Is nought but aſhes and a ſhade.
 Who knows if Jove, who counts our ſcore,
 Will toſs us in a morning more?
 What with our friend you nobly ſhare
 At leaſt you reſcue from your heir. 20
 Not you Torquatus, boaiſt of Rome,
 When Minos once has fix'd your doom,
 Or eloquence, or ſplendid birth,
 Or virtue, ſhall reſtore to earth.
 Hippolytus, unjuſtly ſlain, 25
 Diana calls to life in vain;

Nor can the might of Theseus rend
The chains of hell that hold his friend. 28

ON SEEING A BUST OF MRS. MONTAGUE.

HAD this fair figure which this frame displays,
Adorn'd in Roman time the brightest days,
In every dome, in every sacred place,
Her statue would have breath'd an added grace,
And on its basis would have been enroll'd,
“ This is Minerva, cast in virtue's mould.” 5

Scatt'ring, as thy pinions play,
Liquid fragrance all the way :
Is it business ? is it love ?
Tell me, tell me, gentle dove. 10

Soft Anacreon's vows I hear,
Vows to Myrtale the fair ;
Grac'd with all that charms the heart,
Blushing nature, smiling art,
Venus, courted by an ode, 15
On the bard her dove bestow'd :
Vested with a master's right,
Now Anacreon rules my flight ;
His the letters that you see,
Weighty charge, consign'd to me : 20
Think not yet my service hard,
Joyless task without reward ;
Smiling at my master's gates,
Freedom my return awaits ;
But the liberal grant in vain 25
Tempt me to be wild again.

Can a prudent dove decline
Blissful bondage such as mine ?
Over hills and fields to roam,
Fortune's guest without a home ; 30
Under leaves to hide one's head,
Slightly shelter'd, coarsely fed :
Now my better lot bestows
Sweet repast, and soft repose :
Now the generous bowl I sip 35
As it leaves Anacreon's lip :

Void of care and free from dread,
 From his fingers snatch his bread;
 Then with luscious plenty gay,
 Round his chamber dance and play;
 Or from wine as courage springs,
 O'er his face extend my wings;
 And when feast and frolic tire,
 Drop asleep upon his lyre.
 This is all, be quick and go,
 More than all thou canst not know;
 Let me now my pinions ply,
 I have chatter'd like a pye.

40

45

48

LINES

Written in ridicule of certain Poems published in 1777.

WHERESOE'ER I turn my view,
 All is strange, yet nothing new;
 Endless labour all along,
 Endless labour to be wrong;
 Phrase that time has flung away,
 Uncouth words in disarray,
 Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet,
 Ode, and elegy, and sonnet.

5

8

PARODY OF A TRANSLATION

FROM THE MEDEA OF EURIPIDES.

ERR shall they not, who resolute explore
 Times gloomy backward with judicious eyes;
 And scanning right the practices of yore,
 Shall deem our hoar progenitors unwise.

They to the dome where smoke with curling play
 Announc'd the dinner to the regions round,
 Summon'd the singer blythe, and harper gay,
 And aided wine with dulcet-streaming sound.

5

The better use of notes, or sweet or shrill,
 By quiv'ring string, or modulated wind;
 Trumpet or lyre—to their harsh bosoms chill,
 Admission ne'er had sought, or could not find.

10

Oh! send them to the fullen mansions dun,
 Her baleful eyes where Sorrow rolls around;
 Where gloom-ennamour'd Mischief loves to dwell, 15
 And Murder, all blood-bolter'd, schemes the wound.

When cates luxuriant pile the spacious dish,
 And purple nectar glads the festive hour;
 The guest, without a want, without a wish,
 Can yield no room to music's soothing power.

BURLESQUE

Of the Modern Versifications of Ancient Legendary Tales.

AN IMPROMPTU.

THE tender infant meek and mild,
 Fell down upon the stone;
 The nurse took up the squealing child,
 But still the child squeal'd on. 4

EPITAPH FOR MR. HOGARTH.

THE hand of him here torpid lies,
 That drew th' essential form of grace;
 Here clos'd in death th' attentive eyes,
 That saw the manners in the face. 4

TRANSLATION

*Of the two first Stanzas of the Song "Rio verde, Rio verde,"
 printed in Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.*

AN IMPROMPTU.

GLASSY water, glassy water,
 Down whose current clear and strong,
 Chiefs confus'd in mutual slaughter,
 Moor and Christian roll along. 4

TO MRS. THRALE,

On her compleating her thirty-fifth Year.

AN IMPROMPTU.

OF in danger, yet alive,
 We are come to thirty five;
 Long may better years arrive,
 etter years than thirty-five.

Could philosophers contrive
 Life to stop at thirty-five,
 Time his hours should never drive
 O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
 High to soar, and deep to dive,
 Nature gives at thirty five. 10
 Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
 Trifle not at thirty-five;
 For, howe'er we boast and strive,
 Life declines from thirty-five:
 He that ever hopes to thrive, 15
 Must begin by thirty-five;
 And all who wisely wish to wive
 Must look on Thrall at thirty-five. 18

IMPROMPTU TRANSLATION

*Of an Air in the Clemenza de Tito of Metastasio,
 beginning "Deh se piacermi vuoi."*

WOULD you hope to gain my heart,
 Bid your teasing doubts depart;
 He who blindly trusts will find 3
 Faith from every generous mind:
 He who still expects deceit,
 Only teaches how to cheat. 6

LINES

Written under a Print representing Persons skating.

O'ER crackling ice, o'er gulphs profound,
 With nimble glide the skaters play;
 O'er treach'rous pleasure's flow'ry ground
 Thus lightly skim, and haste away. 4

TRANSLATION

*Of a Speech of Aquileio, in the Adriano of Metastasio,
 beginning, "Tu che in Corte invecchiasti."*

GROWN old in courts, thou art not surely one
 Who keeps the rigid rules of ancient honour;
 Well skill'd to sooth a foe with looks of kindness,
 To sink the fatal precipice before him,
 And then lament his fall with seeming friendship: 5
 Open to all, true only to thyself,

Thou know'st those arts which blast with envious
 Which aggravate a fault with feign'd excuses, [praise
 And drive discount'nanc'd virtue from the throne :
 That leave the blame of rigour to the prince, 10
 And of his ev'ry gift usurp the merit ;
 That hide in seeming zeal a wicked purpose,
 And only build upon each other's ruin. 13

IMPROMPTU.

*On hearing Miss Thrale consulting with a Friend about
 a Gown and Hat she was inclined to wear.*

WEAR the gown, and wear the hat,
 Snatch thy pleasures while they last ;
 Hadst thou nine lives, like a cat,
 Soon those nine lives would be past. 4

TRANSLATION OF VIRGIL.

PASTORAL I.

Milebæus.

NOW, Tityrus, you, supine and careless laid,
 Play on your pipe beneath this beechen shade ;
 While wretched we about the world must roam,
 And leave our pleasing fields and native home,
 Here at your ease you sing your amorous flame, 5
 And the wood rings with Amarilla's name.

Tityrus. Those blessings, friend, a deity bestow'd,
 For I shall never think him less than God ;
 Oft on his altars shall my firstlings lie, 10
 Their blood the consecrated stones shall dye :
 He gave my flocks to graze the flow'ry meads,
 And me to tune at ease th' unequal reeds.

Milebæus. My admiration only I exprest,
 (No spark of envy harbours in my breast) 15
 That when confusion o'er the country reigns,
 To you alone this happy state remains.
 Here I, though faint myself, must drive my goats,
 Far from their ancient fields and humble cots.
 This scarce I lead, who left on yonder rock 20
 Two tender kids, the hopes of all the flock.
 Had we not been perverse and careless grown,
 This dire event by omens was foreshown ;

Our trees were blasted by the thunder stroke,
 And left-hand crows from an old hollow oak.
 Foretold the coming evil by their dismal croak. 26

TRANSLATION OF HORACE.

BOOK I. ODE XXII.

THE man, my friend, whose conscious heart
 With virtue's sacred ardour glows,
 Nor taints with death th' envenom'd dart,
 Nor needs the guard of Moorish bows :

Through Scythia's icy cliffs he treads, 5
 Or horrid Afric's faithless sands ;
 Or where the fam'd Hydaspes spreads
 His liquid wealth o'er barb'rous lands.

For while by Chloe's image charm'd,
 Too far in Sabine woods I stray'd ; 10
 Me singing, careless, and unarm'd,
 A grisly wolf surpris'd, and fled.

No savage more portentous stain'd
 Apulias spacious wilds with gore ;
 None fiercer Juba's thirsty land, 15
 Dire nurse of raging lions, bore.

Place me where no soft summer gale
 Among the quiv'ring branches sighs ;
 Where clouds condens'd for ever veil
 With horrid gloom the frowning skies ; 20

Place me beneath the burning line,
 A clime deny'd to human race ;
 I'll sing of Chloe's charms divine,
 Her heavenly voice, and beauteous face. 24

TRANSLATION OF HORACE,

BOOK II. ODE IX.

CLOUDS do not always veil the skies,
 Nor showers immerse the verdant plain ;
 Nor do the billows always rise,
 Or storms afflict the ruffled main.

Nor, Valgius, on th' Armenian shores 5
 Do the chain'd waters always freeze ;

Not always furious Boreas roars,
Or bends with violent force the trees.

But you are ever drown'd in tears,
For Mystes dead you ever mourn ;
No setting Sol can ease your cares,
But finds you sad at his return.

10

The wise experienc'd Grecian sage,
Mourn'd not Antilochus so long ;
Nor did King Priam's hoary age
So much lament his slaughter'd son.

15

Leave off, at length, these woman's sighs,
Augustus' numerous trophies sing ;
Repeat that prince's victories,
To whom all nations tribute bring.

20

Niphates rolls an humbler wave,
At length the undaunted Scythian yields,
Content to live the Romans' slave,
And scarce forsakes his native fields.

24

TRANSLATION

Of part of the Dialogue between Hector and Andromache.
FROM THE SIXTH BOOK OF HOMER'S ILIAD.

SHE ceas'd : then godlike Hector answer'd kind,
(His various plumage sporting in the wind)
That post, and all the rest, shall be my care ;
But shall I then forsake the unfinish'd war ?
How would the Trojans brand great Hector's name !
And one base action sully all my fame,
Acquir'd by wounds and battles bravely fought !
Oh ! how my soul abhors so mean a thought :
Long have I learn'd to flight this fleeting breath,
And view with cheerful eyes approaching death. 10
The inexorable Sisters have decreed
That Priam's house, and Priam's self shall bleed :
The day shall come, in which proud Troy shall yield,
And spread its smoking ruins o'er the field.
Yet Hecuba's, nor Priam's hoary age, 15
Whose blood shall quench some Grecian's thirsty rage,

Nor my brave brothers that have bit the ground,
 Their souls dismiss'd through many a ghastly wound,
 Can in my bosom half that grief create,
 As the sad thought of your impending fate : 20
 When some proud Grecian dame shall tasks impose,
 Mimic your tears, and ridicule your woes :
 Beneath Hyperia's waters shall you sweat,
 And fainting scarce support the liquid weight :
 Then shall some Argive loud insulting cry, 25
 Behold the wife of Hector, guard of Troy !
 Tears, at my name, shall drown those beauteous eyes,
 And that fair bosom heave with rising sighs !
 Before that day, by some brave hero's hand,
 May I lie slain, and spurn the bloody sand ! 30

TO MISS ****

*On her playing upon a Harpsichord in a Room hung with Flower-pieces
of her own Painting.*

WHEN Stella strikes the tuneful string
 In scenes of imitated spring,
 Where beauty lavishes her powers
 On beds of never-fading flowers,
 And pleasure propagates around 5
 Each charm of modulated sound ;
 Ah ! think not in the dangerous hour,
 The nymph fictitious as the flower,
 But shun, rash youth, the gay alcove,
 Nor tempt the snares of wily love. 10

When charms thus press on every sense,
 What thought of flight or of defence ?
 Deceitful hope and vain desire,
 For ever flutter o'er her lyre,
 Delighting as the youth draws nigh, 15
 To point the glances of her eye,
 And forming with unerring art
 New chains to hold the captive heart.

But on those regions of delight
 Might truth intrude with daring flight. 20
 Could Stella, sprightly, fair, and young,
 One moment hear the moral song,

Instruction with her flowers might spring,
And wisdom warble from her string.

Mark when from thousand mingled dyes 25
Thou seest one pleasing form arise,
How active light and thoughtful shade,
In greater scenes each other aid.
Mark when the different notes agree
In friendly contrariety, 30
How passions well accorded strife,
Gives all the harmony of life ;
Thy pictures shall thy conduct frame,
Consistent still, though not the same ;
Thy music teach the nobler art,
To tune the regulated heart. 36

EVENING,

AN ODE. TO STELLA.

EVENING now from purple wings
Sheds the grateful gifts she brings ;
Brilliant drops bedeck the mead,
Cooling breezes shake the reed ;
Shake the reed, and curl the stream 5
Silver'd o'er with Cynthia's beam ;
Near the chequer'd, lonely grove,
Hears, and keeps thy secrets, love.
Stella, thither let us stray !
Lightly o'er the dewy way. 10
Phœbus drives his burning car,
Hence, my lovely Stella, far ;
In his steed, the queen of night
Round us pours a lambent light ;
Light that seems but just to show 15
Breasts that beat, and cheeks that glow ;
Let us now in whisper'd joy,
Evening's silent hours employ,
Silence best, and conscious shades,
Please the hearts that love invades ; 20
Other pleasures give them pain,
Lovers all but love disdain. 22

WHETHER Stella's eyes are found,
Fix'd on earth, or glancing round,
If her face with pleasure glow,
If she sigh at others woe,
If her easy air expresses
Conscious worth or soft distress,
Stella's eyes, and air, and face,
Charm with undiminish'd grace.

If on her we see display'd
Pendant gems and rich brocade,
If her chintz with less expence
Flows in easy negligence;
Still she lights the conscious flame,
Still her charms appear the same;
If she strikes the vocal strings,
If she's silent, speaks, or sings,
If she sit, or if she move,
Still we love, and still approve.

Vain the casual, transient glance,
Which alone can please by chance,
Beauty, which depends on art,
Changing with the changing art,
Which demands the toilet's aid,
Pendant gems, and rich brocade.
I those charms alone can prize,
Which from constant nature rise,
Which nor circumstance, nor dress,
E'er can make, or more, or less.

TO A FRIEND.

NO more thus brooding o'er yon heap,
With avarice painful vigils keep;
Still unenjoy'd the present store,
Still endless sighs are breath'd for more.
O! quit the shadow, catch the prize,
Which not all India's treasure buys!
To purchase heaven has gold the power?
Can gold remove the mortal hour?
In life can love be bought with gold?
Are friendship's pleasures to be sold?

No—all that's worth a wish—a thought,
 Fair virtue gives unbrib'd, unbought.
 Cease then on trash thy hopes to bind,
 Let nobler views engage thy mind.

With science tread the wond'rous way,
 Or learn the muse's moral lay;
 In social hours indulge thy soul,
 Where mirth and temperance mix the bowl;
 To virtuous love resign thy breast,
 And be, by blessing beauty—blest.

Thus taste the feast by nature spread,
 Ere youth and all its joys are fled;
 Come taste with me the balm of life,
 Secure from pomp and wealth and strife.
 I boast whate'er for man was meant,
 In health, and Stella, and content;
 And scorn! Oh! let that scorn be thine!
 Mere things of clay, that dig the mine.

TO A YOUNG LADY,

ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

THIS tributary verse, receive, my fair,
 Warm with an ardent lover's fondest prayer.
 May this returning day for ever find
 Thy form more lovely, more adorn'd thy mind;
 All pains, all cares, may favouring heaven remove,
 All but the sweet solitudes of love!
 May powerful nature join with grateful art,
 To point each glance, and force it to the heart!
 O then, when conquer'd crowds confess thy sway,
 When e'en proud wealth and prouder wit obey,
 My fair, be mindful of the mighty trust,
 Alas! 'tis hard for beauty to be just.
 Those sovereign charms with strictest care employ:
 Nor give the generous pain, the worthless joy:
 With his own form acquaint the forward fool,
 Shown in the faithful glass of ridicule;
 Teach mimic censure her own faults to find,
 No more let coquettes to themselves be blind,
 So shall Belinda's charms improve mankind.

EPILOGUE

Intended to have been spoken by a Lady who was to personate the Ghost of Hermoine.

YE blooming train, who give despair or joy,
Bless with a smile, or with a frown destroy ;
In whose fair cheeks destructive Cupids wait,
And with unerring shafts distribute fate ;
Whose snowy breasts, whose animated eyes, 5
Each youth admires, though each admirer dies ;
Whilst you deride their pangs in barb'rous play,
Unpitying see them weep, and hear them pray,
And unrelenting sport ten thousand lives away ;
For you, ye fair, I quit the gloomy plains, 10
Where sable night in all her horror reigns ;
No fragrant bowers, no delightful glades,
Receive the unhappy ghosts of scornful maids.
For kind, for tender nymphs, the myrtle blooms,
And weaves her bending boughs in pleasing glooms ;
Perennial roses deck each purple vale, 16
And scents ambrosial breathe in every gale ;
Far hence, are banish'd vapours, spleen and tears,
Tea, scandal, ivory teeth, and languid airs ;
No pug, nor favourite Cupid there enjoys, 20
The balmy kiss for which poor Thyrsis dies ;
Form'd to delight, they use no foreign arms,
Nor torturing whalebones pinch them into charms ;
No conscious blushes there their cheeks inflame,
For those who feel no guilt can know no shame ; 25
Unfaded still their former charms they show,
Around them pleasures wait, and joys for ever new.
But cruel virgins meet severer fates ;
Expell'd and exil'd from the blissful seats,
To dismal realms, and regions void of peace, 30
Where furies ever howl, and serpents hiss,
O'er the sad plains perpetual tempests sigh,
And pois'nous vapours, black'ning all the sky,
With livid hue the fairest face o'ercast,
And ev'ry beauty withers at the blast. 35

H

Where'er they fly their lover's ghosts pursue,
 Inflicting all those ills which once they knew ;
 Vexation, fury, jealousy, despair,
 Vex ev'ry eye, and ev'ry bosom tear ;
 Their foul deformities by all discry'd, 40
 No maid to flatter and no paint to hide.
 Then melt, ye fair, while crowds around you sigh,
 Nor let disdain sit low'ring in your eye ;
 With pity soften ev'ry awful grace,
 And beauty smile auspicious in each face ; 45
 To ease their pain exert your milder power,
 So shall you guiltless reign, and all mankind adore. 47

THE YOUNG AUTHOR.

WHEN first the peasant, long inclin'd to roam,
 Forsakes his rural sports and peaceful home,
 Pleas'd with the scene the smiling ocean yields ;
 He scorns the verdant meads and flow'ry fields ;
 Then dances jocund o'er the watery way, 5
 While the breeze whispers, and the streamers play :
 Unbounded prospects in his bosom roll,
 And future millions lift his rising soul ;
 In blissful dreams he digs the golden mine,
 And raptur'd sees the new-found ruby shine. 10
 Joys insincere ! thick clouds invade the skies,
 Loud roar the billows, high the waves arise ;
 Sick'ning with fear, he longs to view the shore,
 And vows to trust the faithless deep no more.
 So the young author panting after fame, 15
 And the long honours of a lasting name,
 Intrusts his happiness to human kind,
 More false, more cruel than the seas or wind.
 Toil on, dull crowd, in ecstasies he cries,
 For wealth, or title, perishable prize ; 20
 While I those transitory blessings scorn,
 Secure of praise from ages yet unborn.
 This thought once form'd, all counsel comes too late,
 He flies to press, and hurries on his fate ;
 Swiftly he sees the imagin'd laurels spread, 25
 And feels the unfading wreath surround his head.

Warn'd by another's fate, vain youth be wise,
 Those dreams were Settle's once, and Ogilby's!
 The pamphlet spreads, incessant hisses rise,
 To some retreat the baffled writer flies;
 Where no four critics snarl, no sneers molest,
 Safe from the tart lampoon, and stinging jest;
 There begs of heaven, a less distinguish'd lot,
 Glad to be hid, and proud to be forgot.

30

34

FRIENDSHIP:

AN ODE.

PRINTED IN THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, 1743.

FRRIENDSHIP, peculiar boon of heaven,
 The noble minds delight and pride,
 To men and angels only given,
 To all the lower world denied.

While love, unknown among the blest,
 Parent of thousand wild desires,
 The savage and the human breast
 Torment alike with raging fires.

5

With bright, but oft destructive gleam,
 Alike o'er all his light'nings fly,
 Thy lambent glories only beam
 Around the fav'rites of the sky.

20

Thy gentle flows of guiltless joys,
 On fools and villains ne'er descend;
 In vain for thee the tyrant sighs,
 And hugs a flatterer for a friend.

25

Directress of the brave and just,
 O guide us through life's darksome way
 And let the torture's of mistrust
 On selfish bosoms only prey.

30

Nor shall thine ardours cease to glow,
 When souls to peaceful climes remove:
 What raised our virtue here below,
 Shall aid our happiness above.

24

FINIS.

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Johnson, Samuel

The poetical works of S. Johnson with the life of the author

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